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# HEGEL'S INDIA

a reinterpretation,  
with texts

Aakash Singh Rathore  
Rimina Mohapatra

“In our postcolonial times, Hegel’s thoughts on India seem to allow only one reaction: an outright rejection of Hegel’s racist Eurocentrism. *Hegel’s India* takes the challenge of a detailed reading of Hegel’s texts with a surprising result: behind Hegel’s dismissal of India, there lies not only his profound fascination with India but also an uncanny proximity between India’s ancient wisdom and Hegel’s speculative thought. Beneath Hegel’s India, we can discern the traces of what would have been India’s Hegel. [This book] provides a model of how a dialogue between different cultures should be practiced, beyond the confines of Eurocentrism and historicist relativism.”

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# Hegel's India

*A Reinterpretation, with Texts*

Aakash Singh Rathore  
Rimina Mohapatra

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*To time and being,  
the temerity of light and the strangeness of soul*



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*On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name Bhagavad Gita* by Wilhelm Von Humboldt, ed. and trans. Herbert Herring (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1995), pp. 1–151. Reproduced with permission from Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi.

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# REINTERPRETATION





# India in Hegel's System

## The Ladder to the Circle

*Upon this I said to him, "I earnestly beg you would describe that island very particularly to us; be not too short, but set out in order all things relating to their soil, their rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know; and you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them of which we are hitherto ignorant."*

—Thomas More, *Utopia or, The Happy Republic: A Philosophical Romance*, p. 75

René Magritte's *Hegel's Holiday* (1958), oil on canvas, is a curious work. It pictures an umbrella, a glass atop, filled with water, a little over half. To the gazer, the sight would express a bewitching double negative—how to *not be indifferent*. As such, the unruly painted object renders two opposite functions: to repel any water and to contain it at the same time. The first by the umbrella, the second by the glass—together deflecting and holding, a sublated contradiction that the gazer will find hard to be indifferent towards. This book shows that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel too was anything but indifferent.

A relentless engagement with India is integral to Hegel's thought in ways as yet unexplored in Hegelian (or Indological) scholarship. In

an effort to catalyze such explorations, we present here, collected together in one volume for the first time, all of Hegel's writings on and about India, an astonishing 80,000 words! It is remarkable how much effort Hegel expended on what he frequently characterized as "fantastic," "subjective," "wild," "dreamy," "frenzied," "absurd," and "repetitive." Hegel also presented a scathing social critique of the caste order, a theme reiterated in many of his works. The central provocative issue thus is: if Indian art, religion, and philosophy are so grossly inadequate to Hegel's system of philosophy, what explains his decades-long fascination with it in this unparalleled way?

The standard answer (when anyone bothers to address the question) is that Hegel merely sought to show that he was wiser and more learned than his many rivals, especially the German Romantics. That may be true as far as it goes, but it is not sufficient to explain the consistency of Hegel's interest, or, for example, the appearance of Hegel's reflections on Indian thought even in the final sections of his *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1817). Hegel could have forwarded his anti-Romanticist agenda through numerous other means than India. And even if Indian art, religion, and philosophy were the best domains for Hegel to outshine and outwit his rivals, it still hardly accounts for the obsession visible in his voluminous and, importantly, evolving approaches to the Indian spirit. It is much more adequately explanatory to assume rather that Indian thought intrigued Hegel on its own merits, and not just for proxy war. Indeed, an attentive reading of his India writings tends to suggest that Indian thought really haunted Hegel somehow. In this reinterpretation, we argue that it represented a sort of nagging twin that he badly needed to shake off throughout the development of his own philosophy.

This twin clearly possessed him in some respect. Hegel himself indicates the similarity of Indian philosophy to his own thought, such as the conception of the absolute (Brahman). He did, however, achieve two points of clarity in distinguishing his own thought from Indian philosophy: The first was to focus on his pivotal motif of *freedom*, thus railing perpetually against the caste system in Indian society, and attempting to read traces or resonances of casteism into the entire breadth and depth of Indian history, politics, art, religion, and philosophy. The second was to indicate the necessity for dialectical, progressive mediation, and thus frequently to contrast the apparent *stasis*

of Indian thought.<sup>1</sup> But did Hegel really ever manage to exorcise this twin haunting his work?<sup>2</sup> After working through Hegel's huge corpus of India writings, the reader may find reason to doubt it. But it was surely not from a lack of vehement trying.

Hegel's major works include his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), the larger *Science of Logic* (1812–16/1831), along with the briefer *Logic* (which constitutes the first part of his three-volume *Encyclopedia*) (1817), the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), the *Philosophy of History* (1820s), the *Aesthetics* or *Lectures on the Philosophy of Fine Art* (1820s), the *Philosophy of Religion* (1821–31), and the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1820s). In each of them, except the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel explicitly discusses relevant aspects of Indian thought (Indian art, or religion, or philosophy, for example), ranging from a few hundred words (as in the *Philosophy of Right*) to over 20,000 words (as in the *Philosophy of History*). Indeed, even in the *Phenomenology*, there are numerous implicit references to the “oriental” world generally, though not necessarily Indian thought, in sections such as “Lordship and Bondage,” “The Unhappy Consciousness,” “Self-estranged Spirit,” and “Natural Religion.” We glance briefly at Hegel's major texts, taking brief note of his project within them, with the aim of understanding how Hegel's rendition of Indian thought features within his wider project or system.

<sup>1</sup> Hegel celebrates change, negation, mediation, and hence *time*. In his Introduction to the *Philosophy of History*, he defines History as the “development of Spirit in Time.” Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 72. *Stasis* naturally presents itself as an antagonistic trope. In classical Indian philosophical thought, it would appear that the concept of stasis predominates in certain ontological systems: the eternal, immovable, unchanging, permanent, and the *timeless* is termed as the absolute, and all change, transience, modifications are said to be subsumed within it. Here, the idea of *sthitaprajna*, the cognitive state of being *sthita* (static or steady), provides a parallel. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, this tranquil, changeless disposition would in fact apply to the ideal human being, someone who has vanquished fear, desire, and attachment, is content and thus free or liberated. This resonates with the old question: What is the “end” of philosophy? If the answer is Freedom, then what is its innegable connection with time or change?

<sup>2</sup> The notion of “twin” as used in this book was originally inspired by William Desmond's provocative idea of “counterfeit double.” See, for example, his work, *Hegel's God*.

Although the *Phenomenology* does not overtly discuss India within the manifold modes through which Spirit has manifested itself, it is nevertheless important for us to devote a few words to it. For, anyone who aims to properly understand Hegel must have some familiarity with the *Phenomenology*, since, as is well known, Hegel composed the text as an introduction to what would ultimately constitute his definitive presentation of a composite system of science. Indeed, Hegel referred to the work as a “ladder” to his system of philosophy as a whole:

Conversely the individual has the right to demand that science shall hold the ladder to help him to get at least as far as this position, shall show him that he has in himself this ground to stand on.<sup>3</sup>

We need not get entangled in the problems surrounding the imagery or analogy of Hegel's ladder, which derive primarily from the fact that the *Phenomenology* came to lose its prominence in Hegel's system as he (re)conceived his project of a definitive *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. We will return to the *Encyclopedia* shortly. What is necessary to note beforehand about the *Phenomenology* is that it does indeed contain the hallmark characteristics of Hegel's overall system, and is thus valuable for getting a sense of, an introduction to, some of the crucial ideas of that system.

Hegel's approach in the *Phenomenology* entails relating and coordinating various aspects of subjective (or particular) and objective (or abstract) forms of human existence. Hegel's project in this book involves showing the inherent, necessary relationship between, say, what and/or how an individual artist in a community would paint, and the nature of the regime in which he was *gebildet*, “formed” or educated. We raise this point because it is by apprehending this that one may follow the manner by which Hegel might praise or condemn the philosophy or religion of some civilization on account of the level of practical political freedom to be found therein (as he does with India). We normally hold the diverse theoretical or practical explorations or actions of a people to have not

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. Baillie, vol. 1, p. 23. Hence, “The ladder that leads from ‘Sense Certainty ... and Opinion’ (Chapter I) to ‘Absolute Knowledge’ in the last chapter is the *Phenomenology*.” Hegel, “Preface to *Phenomenology*,” in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, ed. Kaufmann, p. 41n5; emphasis added.



one root cause, but a plurality of possibly totally unrelated sources. For Hegel, what is essential is that all of these are manifold expressions of *the* character of a community of people, of their Spirit. That is, the linkages between these different (even ostensibly opposed) aspects of human life taken as a whole are, for Hegel, the key to understanding the whole, which the *Phenomenology* claims to fathom.

Recognizing this helps us digest some of the seemingly far-fetched associations that Hegel makes in later works, such as in his 1827 essay ("On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name Bhagavad-Gita by Wilhelm Von Humboldt," Chapter 1 of the Texts section of this volume), when he remarks that all factual or historical works penned by Indian Brahmins are necessarily suspect, since this community, on top of consigning half the Indian population to an abject condition of subhuman existence, is also known to readily prostitute their priesthood. An overhasty generalization, to be sure, but one that we may comprehend by recalling the synthetic method adopted in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel, to be explicit, is motivated by a thought tantamount to something like this: any group of society so vehemently denying freedom to such a large portion of its own people, even going so far as to codify this bondage through religious scripture, which, being holy, rather than enslaving people should be elevating them, has got to be fundamentally corrupt in character, and thus the words they pen must stand as suspect.

In other words, what we glean from Hegel's procedure in the *Phenomenology* is that the nature of a religion (we begin arbitrarily with religion) informs the nature of its people and polity; the nature of the polity informs the nature of its philosophy; the nature of its philosophy informs the nature of its art, and so on through every aspect of human life, until we come back round again to the nature of a religion, where we chanced to begin. We could have begun, instead, with the history of a people, or their polity, and then come back round to it. This is how the *Phenomenology* serves as a ladder to climb up into Hegel's system, on account of the synoptic, syncretic, or synthetic dialectic approach that he deploys therein. The whole that finally gets represented thereby forms a *circle*, as will be evinced shortly.

We may understand the dialectic more clearly through Hegel's own prosaic example of the life of a plant. He argues that during the development of a plant, the bud, blossom, and fruit, each, in some sense, negates

the prior. As he says in the *Phenomenology*, "These forms do not only differ, they also displace each other because they are incompatible."<sup>4</sup> However, they are each successive stages in the development of the self-same plant, they are "elements of an organic unity," where each is as necessary as the other.<sup>5</sup>

When we speak of one form negating the prior, we should note that for Hegel negation is not just annihilation; rather, it is a means of picking up and preserving—through negation, some part is canceled while another part is preserved in the next (higher) stage of unity.<sup>6</sup> Thus he says:

Negation is just as much Affirmation as Negation ... what is self-contradictory resolves itself ... into the negation of its *particular* content ... such a negation is not an all-embracing Negation, but is *the negation of a definite somewhat* which abolishes itself, and thus is a definite negation ... thus the result contains in essence that from which it results.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, Hegel's dialectic is often characterized as a negative dialectic, although it does not end in nullity; instead, as already described, it results in knowledge.

Having highlighted the necessary interrelation of the abstract and the concrete through the instrument of a mediating sublation, and having called attention to this interrelation with the purpose of preparing the reader for certain unexpected tropes in Hegel's discourse when we reach the analysis of his India writings, we may once again treat of the nature of Hegel's system, but this time less from (a) the *formal* standpoint of its inherent *logic* (or, the *dialectic* and its role in achieving the absolute), and (b) more from that of the goal in *concrete*, which for Hegel is *freedom*.

When we speak of freedom, we must speak more directly about *Spirit*. Hegel argues in the *Philosophy of History* that the nature of Spirit may be understood by a glance at its direct opposite, namely, matter. "As the essence of Matter is Gravity, so, on the other hand, we may

<sup>4</sup> Hegel, "Preface to Phenomenology," in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, ed. Kaufmann, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel, "Preface to Phenomenology," p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Aufheben* or "sublation" may be defined as that which is at once picked up, canceled, and preserved.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. Johnston and Struthers, vol. 1, p. 65.

affirm ... the essence of Spirit is Freedom."<sup>8</sup> Matter has its essence or center outside itself (that is, the center of gravity), while Spirit is "*self-contained existence*" and this, he argues, "is Freedom, exactly."<sup>9</sup>

Hegel argues that freedom, in its *formal* aspect, entails that "in what confronts the subject there is nothing alien and it is not a limitation or a barrier; on the contrary, the subject finds himself in it."<sup>10</sup> The *content* of freedom, by contrast, is "the rational in general."<sup>11</sup> Thus, an illiterate person, by this understanding, would be *unfree* insofar as the world he confronted would be alien, replete as it is with hopelessly indecipherable script.

The subject also has to confront a similar sense of *unfreedom* within his own subjective life. Within the subjective sphere itself, there appears an opposition between the universal laws of right, good, and so on, and the individual subjective impulses. Our impulses seek constant satisfaction, and often come into conflict with our rational acknowledgment of the moral or right course of action. Further, even the satisfaction of these impulses is only just temporary; no matter how much we eat at a given point of time, we will inevitably be hungry again. The Spirit seeks absolute satisfaction and thus is not content with the ephemeral satisfaction of impulses.

This constant need for satisfaction is what keeps the Spirit pressing on, seeking freedom in knowledge and action. The process of history is aiming towards man's knowledge of himself as Spirit, whose essence is freedom; or in other words, the process of history is the process of the Spirit revealing itself (to itself) as freedom.

Both these oppositions (that is, that within the subject, and that between the subject and the world) are, Hegel claims, resolved within a *good* State—one which is articulated rationally. How so? First of all, Hegel says that in history, one can only discuss people who formed states. Strictly speaking, the State is the locus of history wherein freedom gains objective existence. The good State "is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom."<sup>12</sup> For Hegel, the

<sup>8</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 17; emphasis in original.

<sup>10</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. Knox, vol. 1, p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. Knox, vol. 1, p. 97.

<sup>12</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 38.

development or progress of the State occurs as the non-rational laws are either abolished or become rationalized—much like the non-rational philosophies in the history of philosophy. In a good State, *all* the laws and organizations are a realization of freedom.

In a good State, the oppositions have been overcome: the subject has realized himself through objectifying himself. Further, in realizing himself, the subject recognizes his own nature as Spirit, which is essentially rational, and this rationality is identified with that of the laws of the State. Thus, in the life of the State, there remains nothing alien confronting the subject, nor is there a conflict within the subject, as he has identified himself as Spirit, which is essentially rational.

The goal of the political, then, is coterminous with the *end of history*: all the institutions and laws of the State would be an actualization of freedom, and each individual would recognize himself, and every human being, as an embodiment of freedom.<sup>13</sup> It is not surprising then that Hegel's infamous idea is formulated as follows:

The Orientals have not attained the knowledge that Spirit—Man *as such*—is free; and because they do not know this, they are not free. They only know that *one is free*. But on this very account, the freedom of that one is only caprice; ferocity—brutal recklessness of passion, or a mildness and tameness of the desires, which is itself only an accident of Nature—mere caprice like the former. That *one* is therefore only a Despot; not a *free man*. The consciousness of Freedom first arose among the

<sup>13</sup> As Francis Fukuyama would argue later, “Both Hegel and Marx believed that the evolution of human societies was not open-ended, but would end when mankind had achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings [or] an ‘end of history’: for Hegel this was the liberal state” (Fukuyama, *The End of History*, p. 12). Following Alexandre Kojève, Fukuyama argues that Hegel sees “the first glimmer of human freedom” in the “struggle for recognition” (Fukuyama, *The End of History*, p. xvi). While “human beings like animals have natural needs and desires for objects outside themselves such as food, drink, shelter, and above all the preservation of their own bodies,” they differ fundamentally because in addition they desire “the desire of other men” (Fukuyama, *The End of History*, p. xvi). In other words, “human history is the history of desired Desires” (Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 6). The idea of freedom that Hegel cannot seem to abandon is this express longing of the human soul: the need to be “recognized” as human beings—Fukuyama continues—“as a being with a certain worth or dignity” which will move them



Greeks, and therefore they were free; but they, and the Romans likewise, knew only that *some* are free—not man as such. Even Plato and Aristotle did not know this. The Greeks, therefore, had slaves; and their whole life and the maintenance of their splendid liberty, was implicated with the institution of slavery: a fact moreover, which made that liberty on the one hand only an accidental, transient and limited growth; on the other hand, constituted it a rigorous thralldom of our common nature—of the Human. The German nations, under the influence of Christianity, were the first to attain the consciousness, that man, as man, is free: that it is the *freedom of Spirit* which constitutes its essence.<sup>14</sup>

In what appears as a judgment fraught with hubris, to be expected from a man standing at the end or culmination of history,<sup>15</sup> clearly yet again Hegel's motive at core is to reinforce true and complete freedom in the world: freedom untarnished by vacuous abstraction, and actualized by mediation and concretion. This is not to excuse the ridiculous, prejudiced vision laid out in his progressive, supersessionist universal history, but rather just to explain some of its (benign) impetus.

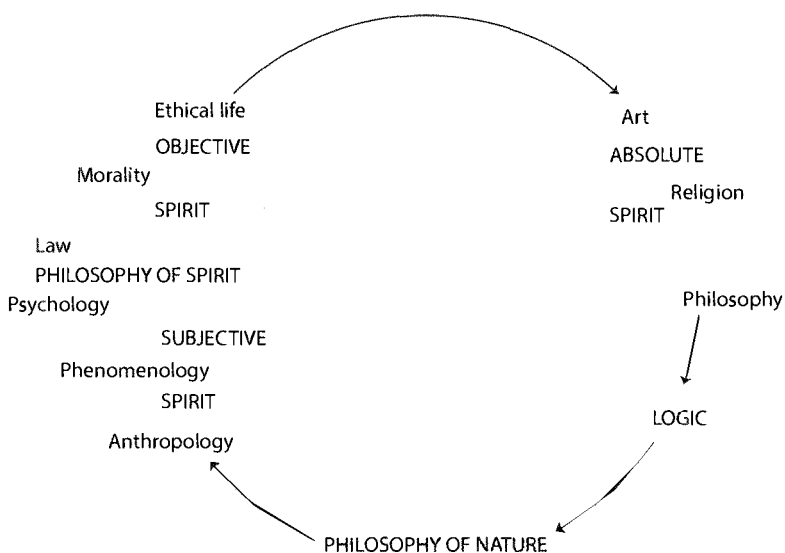
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to even "staking their lives in a mortal battle," and as Kojève put it, rising above their "biological instinct of preservation." See Fukuyama, *The End of History*, p. xvi, and Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 41. Jacques Derrida critiques the view heralding liberal democratic societies as the end of history: "Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the 'end of ideologies' and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved or exterminated on the earth" (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 85).

<sup>14</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> The scene is set for Friedrich Nietzsche as follows:

The historical imagination has never flown so far, even in a dream; for now the history of man is merely the continuation of that of animals and plants; the universal historian finds traces of himself even in the utter depths of the sea, in the living slime. He stands astounded in the face of the enormous way that man has run, and his gaze quivers before the mightier wonder, the modern man who can see all the way! He stands proudly on the pyramid of the world-process; and while he lays the final stone of his knowledge, he seems to cry aloud to listening Nature: "We are at the top, we are at the top; we are the completion of Nature!" Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, p. 55.



To turn once more to the System, it is obvious that politics and history form a nexus, analogous as we saw also with philosophy and religion. With this we may observe that—although they deal with distinct themes in themselves—all of Hegel's works are inextricably linked together. This is a product of Hegel's style of doing philosophy. Hegel's thought comes across as a system where all particulars take their respective places along the *circle of knowledge*. Each step develops an element in this edifice. Thus, the pictorial representation of Hegel's system above, simplified, is nicely captured as a circle.<sup>16</sup>

In Hegel, the circle appears to close; however, this closure represents the potential for infinity, not finality. It is infinite, for fundamental to this closure is the concrete progression along the curve, that is, the forward march and development, the ever-restless movement of the life of Spirit.

The aim, taken by itself, is a lifeless generality; the tendency is a mere drift which still lacks actuality; and the naked result is the corpse which has left the tendency behind.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Kaufmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary*, p. 243.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, "Preface to Phenomenology," *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Text and Commentary*, ed. Kaufmann, p. 10.

From the ladder to the closed circle we find the Hegelian technique of linking abstract thought with the concretion of the ground situation, or even judging the quality of thought by the quality of the ground conditions, which is the political manifestation of the same Spirit inherent in that thought. In this volume, we shall see how this comes to bear on Hegel's reflections on India and its art, religion, and philosophy. But first let us take a look at the sources of information at Hegel's disposal out of which he was to form his judgments on India and its (political) life and thought.

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## Hegel's Indological Sources and the Standard Interpretation

*You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me?*

— From the film *Taxi Driver*, 1976

In terms of the sheer number of words, Hegel devotes as much attention in his capacious writings to India as he does to the Greek world—indeed, he writes *more* on what he calls the “oriental” world than he does about the Greeks. While much has been written about Hegel concluding his comprehensive *Encyclopedia* (Part III) with an extended passage from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,<sup>1</sup> critics have passed over in silence the much longer passage from Jelaleddin Rumi that just precedes it, and which Hegel says he “cannot refrain from

<sup>1</sup> Hegel starts by saying: “The books of Aristotle on the Soul, along with his discussions on its special aspects and states, are for this reason still by far the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of philosophical value on this topic.” *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, §378, p. 4. He ends by citing (in Greek) the famous Aristotelian passage from *Metaphysics*, Book XII on the “pure activity of divine thought thinking itself” (*noesis noeseos*), making his admiration evident. See Ferrarin, “Hegel’s Aristotle,” p. 433 and *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 126.

quoting."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, they have passed over in silence the astonishing fact that the culmination of Hegel's system—that is, Philosophy as the highest expression of Absolute Spirit, as articulated in the final paragraphs of the *Encyclopedia*, Part III—consists of about 12 pages of text, a full 10 of which are devoted to Indian art, religion, and philosophy. Why would these appear right there at the end, the culmination of it all?

The first time Hegel dealt with India specifically was in the 1817 edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. In the revised edition of 1827, Hegel added a great deal of detail, illustrating not only how much he had learned in the intervening decade, but also indicating the spread of Indological studies in Germany and elsewhere. A conspicuous example is the influence of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In fact, the reception of the *Gita* was critical to philosophical developments taking place in Germany, and was driven by the impetus in philological research, comparative linguistics, the quest for cross-cultural knowledge, as well as the study of mythology and scriptures.<sup>3</sup> Although Hegel also wrote at length on India in the lectures on the history of philosophy, fine art, the philosophy of history, and the philosophy of religion, the published versions we now have of these lectures were not in fact authorized by Hegel and were not published during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> Hegel did, however, also publish a third edition of the *Encyclopedia* in 1830, as well as a very lengthy *Gita* review in 1827. The published texts are more or less in line with the unpublished lectures, although, as the reader will certainly find in the following pages, there is a fair amount of internal inconsistency even in the published India writings.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel quotes the "excellent Jeleleddin-Rumi": "I saw but One through all heaven's starry spaces gleaming: / I saw but One in all sea billows wildly streaming. / I looked into the heart, a waste of worlds, a sea— / I saw a thousand dreams—yet One amid all dreaming. / And earth, air, water, fire, when thy decree is given, / Are molten into One: against thee none hath striven. / There is no living heart but beats unfailingly / In the one song of praise to thee, from earth and heaven." *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, § 573, n.1, pp. 189ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Herling, *The German Gita*.

<sup>4</sup> During Hegel's lifetime, only four of his works were published: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, and the *Philosophy of Right*.

While Hegel was revising his *Encyclopedia*, he came to know of Wilhelm von Humboldt's work on the *Gita* (1826) and dropped what he was doing to work instead on India. Although the 1817 edition of the *Encyclopedia* contained only a small section on India, since 1822 Hegel had been speaking extensively on India in his lectures on the philosophy of history. Upon hearing of Humboldt's work, Hegel decided to add numerous passages, including on the *Gita*, to the revised edition of the *Encyclopedia*.

Hegel's review of Humboldt's *Gita* was longer than Humboldt's own text, and thus had to be published in two separate parts. Humboldt's reaction to the first essay was enthusiastic. In a letter to Hegel (dated 25 February 1827), he wrote thanking him for the "benevolent and flattering manner" with which he introduced his "work to the general public."<sup>5</sup> Humboldt changed his mind after the second part of Hegel's review appeared. Although Hegel refers to Humboldt in respectful terms throughout his review, Humboldt confesses to having felt the sting. In a letter to Friedrich von Gentz (dated 1 March 1828), he wrote, "I cannot in the least appreciate [Hegel's review] ... the entire review is also directed, though concealed, against me personally and clearly reveals his firm opinion that I am anything but a philosopher."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, Humboldt was not a philosopher in comparison with Hegel, but he was a philologist with in-depth experience of Indian languages and literature. Hegel, however, had absolutely no first-hand knowledge of Sanskrit, and for all of his information regarding India he relied on the translations of Henry Thomas Colebrooke, and for the *Gita*, on Charles Wilkins and August Wilhelm von Schlegel.<sup>7</sup> Hegel also employed Johann Jacob Brucker's *Critical History of Philosophy* (1742–4). Brucker had relied largely on biased missionary reports, but also on the work of the German Dravidologist Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg. Immanuel Kant himself had used Brucker's text, and Hegel was certainly aware of Kant's sundry remarks on Indian thought. Additionally, Hegel

<sup>5</sup> Herring, "Introduction," in Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. xvi.

<sup>6</sup> Hoffmeister, *Briefe Von Und an Hegel*: 3, p. 406.

<sup>7</sup> Part 2 of the Bibliography at the end of this volume provides a complete list of Indological writings available to and used by Hegel directly or otherwise. Viyagappa's compilation in *G.W. F. Hegel's Concepts of Indian Philosophy* has aided this exercise.

read Thaddaeus Anselm Rixner's *Manual of the History of Philosophy* (1822). Rixner was the translator of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (1808) from Sanskrit into German, and is the source of common references to India as the "cradle" of philosophy, a phrase which Hegel himself used in opening his *Gita* review.<sup>8</sup>

Interestingly, some of Hegel's sources were in turn influenced by Hegel himself, including Indologist Karl J. Hieronymus Windischmann. Windischmann had edited Franz Bopp's famous *Conjugation System of the Sanskrit Language* (1816), and had published work on Indian thought within the context of a general history of philosophy. Hegel's influence on Windischmann is visible even in the title of Windischmann's capacious history of world philosophies: *Philosophy in the Process of World History* (1829).

One of the reasons for the lack of academic attention to Hegel's India writings could be, as Robert Bernasconi shows, the preponderantly negative and critical attitude that Hegel displays with respect to Indian art, religion, and philosophy.<sup>9</sup> While it is true that the culminating passages of the *Encyclopedia* treat almost exclusively of Indian thought, it is also true that Hegel spends the majority of the time critiquing and devaluing it. In all of Hegel's major writings—including the *Philosophy of History*, the *Philosophy of Art*, the *Philosophy of Religion*, and the *History of Philosophy*—the longest, sustained treatments of one geo-cultural art or religion or philosophy are without exception always of India. But it cannot be denied that Hegel's ultimate assessments are generally negative, critical, and dismissive.

Despite his avid study of secondary sources, Hegel had no direct knowledge of India or Indian languages, literature, and thought. This ignorance of original Indian texts, juxtaposed with the dogmatic manner in which he lays down judgment on Indian thought, has led to a universal condemnation of Hegel as a racist and biased pseudo-scholar or worse. Among the scores of dismissive critics, we can cite Walter

<sup>8</sup> Hegel says, "One cannot but remark that the fame of *Indian wisdom* belongs to the most ancient traditions in history. Where one discusses the sources of *philosophy*, one ... points ... especially to India." *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 3. Hegel uses the word *quellen* here, which could refer variously to a spring, a well, source, or cradle.

<sup>9</sup> Bernasconi, "With What Must the History of Philosophy Begin?"

Leifer's remarks as typical: "Wholly attached to the Occident, [Hegel] speaks of universal values. Yet what does he know of India?"<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm Halbfass, always a balanced and careful writer, remarked about Hegel:

Hegel was not a neutral scholar and expert. He was a philosopher par excellence, representing like few others the glory and greatness ... and arrogance of philosophy.... Hegel tries to comprehend Indian thought as something that is superseded by and contained in modern Western thought.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, according to Halbfass, "The 'Europeanization of the Earth' ... finds its most impressive philosophical testimony in Hegel's system."<sup>12</sup> The Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan wrote: "Hegel related the past history of thought as a collection of errors over against which stood out his own idealism as the truth."<sup>13</sup>

Such are in fact the sober appraisals of Hegel's Eurocentric philosophy, and we fully agree that they seem more or less fair and accurate. And given Hegel's acerbic comments and the magisterial dismissals of the relevance of entire continents—such as his infamous remark that Africa has no history and is therefore irrelevant to his comprehensive philosophy of world history—many reactions to his work are far more aggressive and impatient.<sup>14</sup> Joseph McCarney, for example, notes the "obnoxious and shocking" character of Hegel's "cultural prejudice, complacency, and arrogance."<sup>15</sup> And for decades, philosophers and historians from Karl Popper to Walter Kaufmann have suggested that "the Nazis got their racism from Hegel,"<sup>16</sup> or that Hegel contributes to "the formula for modern racism."<sup>17</sup> There is likely much truth in these views as well.

But what remains passed over in silence in the vitriolic attacks on Hegel's obnoxious prejudice is, precisely, that he spent an enormous

<sup>10</sup> Leifer, *India and the Germans*, p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> Halbfass, "Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer und Indien," p. 426.

<sup>13</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>14</sup> See an account in Bernasconi, "With What Must the Philosophy of World History Begin? On the Racist Basis of Hegel's Eurocentrism," in *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, pp. 171–201.

<sup>15</sup> McCarney, *Hegel on History*, p. 142; cf. p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Kaufmann, "The Hegel Myth and Its Method," p. 102.

<sup>17</sup> Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 252.



amount of time in close and constructive study of diverse writings on Indian art, religion, and philosophy, and drafted hundreds of pages of reflective copy about them. Who among our non-prejudicial contemporary philosophers in Western academia may make such a claim for him/herself? Perhaps a handful among thousands. As Bernasconi says, despite the "Western philosophical imperialism" that Hegel might be construed as standing for, "Hegel was more open to the possibility of Indian philosophy ... than many of us ... even today."<sup>18</sup> Halbfass points out that for Hegel, modern Western thought was indeed marked by "excessive subjectivism and anthropocentrism, its tendency to isolate itself from any firm ground and context ... to lose itself in sheer narcissism."<sup>19</sup> In fact, Hegel takes a step further and urges that we should "bathe the spirit in this [Oriental] unity which is eternal and restful" or "drown in it that [European] subjective vanity with all its cleverness and reflection."<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, Hegel wrote at the height of colonial conquest and in the midst of its intellectual and spiritual justifications, with biased and confused missionary documents among his primary sources. Today, even in a deeply globalized, postcolonial world, fecund with knowledge and information relayed across instant disseminating channels, the furthest that the mainstream of academic philosophy in the West can go toward attempting to accommodate or incorporate aspects of non-Western thought into its philosophical systems seems to be this, to accuse Hegel's (India) writings of racism and prejudice! In a way, it is arguable that given the changed global environment and proliferation of accurate source material, Hegel showed *less* prejudice and arbitrary cultural preference than contemporary philosophers and philosophy department curricula continue to do today.

In consigning India to the margins, and characterizing Indian thought and Sanskrit as "pre-historical," as being outside of the historical development of the Spirit, Hegel may have been responding to his contemporaries with an aggression that might best be described as strongly polemical. In fact, Friedrich Schlegel has often been clearly

<sup>18</sup> Bernasconi, "With What Must the History of Philosophy Begin?", p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 94.

<sup>20</sup> Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, *Oriental Philosophy*, p. 145.

identified as the target of Hegel's critique of Indian thought—India, in this view, is the theatre of a proxy war between Hegel and Schlegel.<sup>21</sup> Herbert Herring also lends credibility to the proxy war hypothesis, although he argues that Hegel's target of attack was Wilhelm von Humboldt and the broader post-Kantian tradition that he represented.<sup>22</sup> After all, as we saw, Hegel's lengthiest and most unrelentingly disparaging treatment of India occurs in his review of Humboldt's 1826 article "On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name Bhagavad-Gita."

Michel Hulin similarly subscribes to the proxy war hypothesis. He puts forward the most widely accepted view that Hegel's target of attack was the German Romantics in general—Hegel used India as the means and publications such as Humboldt's as the occasion to achieve the end of discrediting the Romantics and diffusing their influence.<sup>23</sup> Halbfass concurs:

[F]rom an early time on, we notice [in Hegel] a negative attitude to Romanticism, and this includes a negative response to the Romantic glorification and mystification of the Orient. The anti-romantic perspective provides the background and an important point of departure for Hegel's approach to India. His initial response to the Indian tradition is an expression and continuation of his response to ... Romanticism.<sup>24</sup>

The standard interpretation of Hegel's India writings is true up to a point: India did serve as the theatre for a proxy war against the Romantics. But it is counter-intuitive to permit that explanation to account for the depth and breadth of Hegel's involvement with Indian

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Herring, "Introduction", in Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, pp. xvi–xvii.

<sup>23</sup> Hulin writes: "l'essai de Humboldt sert surtout à Hegel de base de départ pour une présentation synthétique et démythifiante de la culture indienne à un public non averti mais prévenu en sa faveur par l'influence des multiples cercles romantiques" [Humboldt's essay serves primarily as a base for Hegel's departure for a synthetic and demystifying presentation of Indian culture to an uninformed public, a public biased in its favor by the influence of several Romantic circles]. Hulin, *Hegel et l'Orient*, p. 212.

<sup>24</sup> Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 85.

thought across many decades. There was more to it. That we have failed to uncover what more there was is due not so much to Hegel's contempt for "Indian" philosophy, but rather to our own. As academic philosophy departments in the trans-Atlantic region continue the apartheid of Indian from "Western" philosophy, so they continue to project into the history of philosophy their priorities and prejudices. Were we today to struggle to understand Indian art, religion, and philosophy as comprehensively as Hegel had, were we to take it as seriously as he did, then our own assessment of Hegel's India writings would alter and evolve. At the very least, we would fail to continue to be satisfied by the partial explanation provided in the standard interpretation.

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## Hegel's India Writings

### The *Gita* and World History

*Do you ever have déjà vu?  
Didn't you just ask me that?*

— From the film *Groundhog Day*, 1993

Hegel wrote or reflected on Indian thought in nearly all of his major writings. This volume presents these India writings in seven chapters, roughly following Hegel's idea of the development of Spirit as presented in his *Encyclopedia*. In place of the ladder into his system, we first present his *Gita* review, since—like the *Phenomenology*—it presents the most general contours and framework for his overall, later fully developed interpretation and systematic incorporation of India into his own work. We hope this approach justifies not adhering fully to a chronological ordering of the texts.

At the outset, we should note that Hegel's works are vulnerable to the hovering risk of what appears as repetition or recursive argumentation (ironically, a charge he levies frequently against Indian thought). But it is the kind of repetition that is integral to his method and system. It is in working through the various elements and moments, back and forth, that Hegel strives to show their connection, the larger unity of their *absolute* content (Spirit, history, philosophy, art, and religion),

and the particularity of their form in the way they manifest. In this respect, the Texts section of this volume foreshadows the methodology Hegel deploys in the Introductions to all his major works, serving as a prefatory but comprehensive, encompassing nutshell of what is yet to come.

### The Spurious Brood: On the *Gita*

In Chapter 1 of the Texts section of this volume, Hegel's "On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name Bhagavad-Gita by Wilhelm von Humboldt" is presented in a complete English translation.<sup>1</sup> This episode of the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*, when Krishna enunciates the *Bhagavad-Gita*, is now almost universally regarded as one of the foundations of the Hindu religion, cosmogony, theology, mythology, and philosophy. It is said to have been authored sometime between 200 BCE and 300 CE, and targeted toward a Brahmin and Kshatriya audience in an effort to revive Brahminism in the face of Buddhist hegemony.

Hegel approaches this text in a manner still relevant today: by an examination of its cardinal maxim that all claims to the fruits or results of actions must be given up; action is ever for its own sake. Hegel analyzes what this kind of disinterested action might be in the context of a deep moral dilemma, also seeking to show whether the pantheism attributed to the worldview of the *Gita* is in fact appropriate, and to what extent, if at all, the thought presented in the epic can be termed "speculative."

The reader observes Hegel struggling to find footholds for exposing radical, deep-rooted distinctions between the ideas and images of the Indian poem and his own speculative philosophy—in the present case, however, primarily to engage in a tacit critique of the growing German Romantic tradition that he rejected. However, his mixture of ignorance and arrogance is hugely prominent in this text, as Hegel makes numerous protests, for example, about the "tedious repetitions" of Indian poetry,<sup>2</sup> either ignorant of or merely ignoring the fact that repetitions are standard mnemonic techniques in oral epic traditions, and present even in Homeric literature.

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 11.

That Hegel is attacking his contemporaries—specifically the German Romantics—by means of emphasizing alleged deficiencies in the Indian poem is visible throughout his review. For example, Hegel points out that the Governor General of India, Warren Hastings, in a Foreword to Wilkins' translation of the *Gita*, states that the European reader should prepare himself, when about to read the poem, for obscurity, absurdity, barbarian customs, and a depraved morality.<sup>3</sup> As translations of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* would not have been so prefaced, such a silly warning obviously originates in nothing more than the cultural bias of the age. Hegel's point, however, in evoking Hastings' preface was to counterbalance Schlegel's and Humboldt's overenthusiastic estimation of the wisdom to be found in the *Gita*. Wilkins was far kinder to the text than Hastings. Hastings had an instrumental interest in the appearance of the work in English—namely, to continue to foster the recent trust that the natives were beginning to show in the British, who hoped to be seen as more cultivated and benevolent than the earlier intolerant rulers of India. But Wilkins believed that the importance of the text lay in how it established “the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead.”<sup>4</sup> He also believed that the *Gita*'s teachings ran counter to the “idolatrous sacrifices, and the worship of images,” thereby undermining the Vedas without explicitly challenging them.<sup>5</sup> These arguments would have been of much keener interest to Hegel himself, and surely piqued his philosophical interest, even as Hastings' remarks were satisfying to him in his effort to denigrate the *Gita* and discipline the German Romantics.

Hegel's prejudice is also risibly transparent in his comments on the cultural differences between “we Europeans” and Indians.<sup>6</sup> For example, Hegel presents the scene of the poem—Krishna and Arjuna on the battleground, Prince Arjuna about to engage in a battle against members of his own family and clan. At this moment, Arjuna is diffident, and he and Krishna engage in an extended discussion on

<sup>3</sup> Hastings, “Foreword,” in Wilkins, *The Bhagavat-Geeta or Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon*.

<sup>4</sup> Palshikar, *Evil and the Philosophy of Retribution*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Palshikar, *Evil and the Philosophy of Retribution*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 13.

the propriety of the war that leads to a vast metaphysical exposition. Hegel remarks that such a scene is “contrary to all conceptions we Europeans have of war ... and it is also contrary to all our demands of a poetic composition.”<sup>7</sup>

In deriding Arjuna’s “timid scruples,”<sup>8</sup> Hegel forgets some of the greatest moments of his own tradition, of Homer’s epics—for example, Achilles sitting at a distance overlooking the Trojan war, licking his wounds, and Shakespeare’s many battlefield soliloquies and discourses, such as may be found in the *Henriad*. Indeed, recalling Shakespeare, Hegel’s polemics against the “complete otherness”<sup>9</sup> of the Indian worldview from sophisticated German (that is, his own) thought suggests, perhaps, that Hegel “doth protest too much methinks.”<sup>10</sup>

But, again, this was the era of orientalism, and Hegel was by no means alone in “othering” the Indians. When the new English translation of the *Gita* was advertised in London in 1785, this dialogue featuring an Indian prince and his god was dubbed “one of the greatest curiosities ever presented to the literary world.”<sup>11</sup> But Hegel was not just *othering*, he was *bothering*. The standard interpretation fails to account for the latter, not simply because of Hegel’s orientalism, racism, and prejudice, but because it need not proceed further—because we do not, because we are not even expected to, bother. Herling captures this well:

Fixating on this negative side does not give the full picture: “critical consciousness” about this contribution to Eurocentric discourse is important and necessary, but ... the criticism can be self-defeating ... and as a result, the dislocations and disruptions *within* Hegel’s Eurocentric system itself are missed. Transforming this complex moment of intellectual encounter with India into an Orientalist straw-man is not the best historical approach—and it hardly serves the theoretical interests of the present.<sup>12</sup>

As provocative as this suggestion is, in a review of Herling’s book, Thom Brooks threw up a challenge to the relevance of Herling’s claim

<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene II.

<sup>11</sup> Palshikar, *Evil and the Philosophy of Retribution*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Herling, *The German Gita*, p. 221.

in the form of a question which he himself chose to answer: "What did Hegel change because of his reading of the *Gita*? The answer appears to be 'nothing'."<sup>13</sup> Brooks' question is interesting, but it is also misleading. First, Brooks demands a great deal of both Hegel and Herling, for Brooks' insinuation seems to be that anything less than a Schopenhauerian reaction to Indian thought by Hegel undermines Herling's claim that Hegel's encounter with the *Gita* was meaningful. And second, in replying to his own question in the negative, Brooks himself fails to be open to the significance of the inclusion of India-related material in Hegel's revised editions of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. For Hegel had already dealt with India in the 1817 edition of the *Encyclopedia*, and might easily have stopped there. But the revised edition of 1827 included a great deal of detail, illustrating just how much he had learned about Indian thought, including the *Gita*. What did Hegel change because of his reading of the *Gita*? He did not change his mind, but he did change the *Encyclopedia*.

Turning to his focus in the *Gita* review, Hegel follows Humboldt's lead in identifying three key concepts requiring elaboration and understanding: (a) *dharma*, primarily via ethical action; (b) *yoga*, on the nature of spiritual practice, for example, meditation; and (c) *brahman*, trying to get at the crux of the nature of divinity. We shall discuss in detail what Hegel has to say about (b) and (c) in later sections on the *Philosophy of Religion*. Here we shall concern ourselves only with (a).

The idea of *dharma* or duty/justice presented in the *Gita* may be seen in terms of varying levels of (social) obligation—owing to station, occupation (*varnashrama*), and the caste-binding factor is one among them. Arjuna's moral dilemma arises out of the conflict between the *varnadharma* (*dharma* of the caste), *kuladharmā* (*dharma* of family/clan), and the *sadharanadharmā* (*dharma* common to all persons in all contexts), and his own actions in a given situation. Hegel circumscribes it thus:

Whether this doubt involves a *moral* quality, as it seems to do at first, must be dependent on, the nature of that value which in the Indian Arjuna's mentality is attached to family-ties. To the moral

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, Review of Herling, *The German Gita*.



understanding of the European the sense of this tie is the moral in itself ... in the fact that all sentiments connected with this tie, such as respect, obedience, friendship, etc. as well as actions and duties related to family-relationship, have that love as their foundation and as a self-sufficient starting point. We see, however, that it is not this moral sentiment which in the hero causes the reluctance to lead his relatives to the slaughter... not in the sense that killing them as relatives ... would be in itself the crime, but the crime would be a *consequence*, namely that through extinction of the generations the *sacra gentilitia*, the duty-bound and religious performances of a family would be destroyed.... In that way the *noble* women-folk—of the tribe the men only can first of all be killed, for they alone are engaged in the battle—will be defiled, from which results *varna-sankara*, the mixture of castes (*the spurious brood*).<sup>14</sup>

The mainstream of interpreters of the *Gita* has largely downplayed this reactionary caste-retrenching aspect of the text, reading it contextually as merely counter-reformative (anti-Buddhist) Brahminical orthodoxy. At the same time, other commentators—possibly following the lead of anti-Brahminical interpreters such as Dr B. R. Ambedkar—have chosen to keep their attention on the caste issue, rather than sidestepping it. In a pioneering recent work on the *Gita*, Palshikar has telescoped the doctrine just as poignantly as Hegel did, by tying the moral economy of the *Gita* to a back story elaborated upon throughout the Puranas:

When people of every *varna* behave contrary to the ways prescribed for them in the *shastras*, the Vedas are not respected, women behave in wanton ways, there is a social and sexual mixing of the *varnas*, there will be no order, robbers will rob with impunity, dishonesty of all sorts will flourish, the good and the righteous few will suffer, there will be general atmosphere of insecurity and distrust, and mankind will be afflicted with dreadful diseases, hunger and calamitous events.<sup>15</sup>

Hegel's own obsession with "the spurious brood" in his interpretation of the *Gita* serves to underline one of his primary motives: to starkly differentiate his ethics of freedom from the *Gita*'s ethics of

<sup>14</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Palshikar, *Evil and the Philosophy of Retribution*, p. 42.

caste. This maneuver was necessitated partly because of the anxiety created by the possibly profound spiritual practices articulated through the yoga doctrine, and the possibly enlightened notion of the Godhead, Brahman, as spirit—in short, the potentially “speculative” nature of Indian thought. But even taking the dharma doctrine, leaving the caste issue to one side, within Hegel’s broader reading of the *Gita*, we can observe that in the conflict that underlies Krishna’s proposal to Arjuna, we might glean one manifestation of the Hegel twin, in this case related to the conception and elaboration of *Sittlichkeit* from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. Numerous Indian commentators, from Sri Aurobindo to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,<sup>16</sup> have remarked on the similarities of conception. Sri Aurobindo points out, “The central interest of the *Gita*’s philosophy and Yoga is its attempt, the idea with which it sets out, continues and closes, to reconcile and even effect a kind of unity between the inner spiritual truth in its most absolute and integral realisation and the outer actualities of man’s life and action.”<sup>17</sup>

How “speculative” the thought of this epic just might be is therefore a puzzle urgently demanding Hegel’s attention: but it is not the usual impulse we have, which is to solve a puzzle. Rather, in Hegel’s case, it is the unlikely impulse to ensure that pieces of the puzzle go missing. To put this another way, and to re-apply a remark of Herling’s insightful discussion of Hegel’s *Gita*: “In the end, Indian religious thought could not be safely catapulted into the ancient, innocent past: in fact, it drifted dangerously close to the European present.”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Herling concludes, quite in line with our reinterpretation, that “Indian thought had drifted too close to ... Hegel’s own thinking.”<sup>19</sup>

### Somnambular Garden of Love: India within World History

Hegel is probably the harshest in his *Philosophy of World History* (Chapter 2 of the Texts section of this volume). The philosophy of history seeks to capture the tortuous journey of the Spirit in its

<sup>16</sup> Varma, *The Political Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 294; and Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, pp. 38ff.

<sup>17</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, p. 563.

<sup>18</sup> Herling, *The German Gita*, p. 234.

<sup>19</sup> Herling, *The German Gita*, p. 237.

movement towards the consciousness of freedom, and, as many scholars have highlighted—following Alexandre Kojève’s emphatic reading—toward the possibility of the appearance of Hegel’s own philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

Synthetic thoughts encompassing all the globe seemed to reign supreme among the worldly intellectuals of Hegel’s time, whether in their political manifestation as socialism, their aesthetic manifestation as Romanticism, their philological manifestation as the search for an *Ursprache* or proto-Indo-European language ultimately linking all great civilizations at a unified cradle or source, or their philosophical manifestation as a quest for absolute knowledge with not merely a universally valid force, but indeed a universally comprehensive source. It was in this vein that the German Indologists so eagerly explored and promulgated whatever morsels of literature or philosophy were available to them from India.

Hegel was himself willy-nilly immersed in this syncretist mood, albeit vectored by his peculiar genius. He had the personal ambition to collect from far corners every worthwhile sundry piece of human knowledge and cultural achievement and to synthesize it all into one resource, a compendium of complete knowledge, which as mentioned he would call the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. At the center of the word *encyclopedia* we observe the term *cyclo*, circle or cycle. Hegel would consciously use the imagery of the circle as symbolic of the completeness of his philosophical system.

Central to Hegel’s thought overall is the idea that truth is never merely abstract; the Hegelian Absolute is never a “lifeless universal.”<sup>21</sup> In effect, he demands that the universal, the general, and the abstract must be constantly shaped by the living particular, dynamic concretion. For this reason, truth for him is mediation. To put this in another way, activity is the condition of being. Everything must be stirred *in* action, in thriving reality, for it to have meaning or being.

<sup>20</sup> For Kojève, in Hegel, absolute Knowledge “reveals the *totality* of Being,” and “can be realized only at the *end* of History, in the *last* World created by Man,” a world in which true freedom has been realized. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, p. 2.

Hegel transforms the notion of “pure” knowledge inherited from the influential philosophy of Immanuel Kant into one which is concrete, historically mediated, derived, evolved, striven for, experienced, lived, and realized. Hegel disapproves of empty schemas, skeletal frameworks of concepts and categories, and pure formal abstract universals. The absolute, universal, and objective then cannot be seen in isolation of the concrete, particular, and subjective. Minds are mediated by history. At the end of this process of history, Spirit is to be fully itself. Far from the belief that immediacy and a primal encounter with knowledge is superior because it is less distorted by human hands, Hegel introduces mediation, the clue to absolute knowledge. To him, human manipulation in fact brings forth determinate knowledge. He thus applies a “humanizing” dimension to ontology and knowledge, and, by doing this in its entirety, he gives Spirit the potential access to absolute knowledge.

The Absolute for Hegel is never static and at rest; instead, it is a function of a fiery course. Thus the emphasis on historicity, which serves to show that what is fundamental to the Spirit is its rich concretion, the life of passion, activity, force, and will. Moreover, this activity or striving entails that the change brought with it is an outcome of contradiction, strife, struggle, and negativity. This ushers in Hegel's celebrated dialectic. Though this method appears already in the writings of Kant in the form of antinomies, Hegel's dialectic aims to overcome the skepticism that antinomies result in. That there is an impasse in the formulation of certain kinds of questions forces Kant to proscribe absolute knowledge. Instead, the Hegelian dialectic makes absolute knowledge possible, allowing in turn the self-reflexive subject's potential assertion that (s)he *has* knowledge of the subject, the object, and their relation, or the unbound knowledge of things-in-themselves.

Within this grandest of grand narratives, the self-unfolding Spirit of the orient, according to Hegel, represents the infant stage of political consciousness, which has not known a true conception of freedom.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Hegel says that India has “remained stationary and fixed”; it “is the region of fantasy and sensibility”; and that “Absolute Being is presented here as in the ecstatic state of a dreaming condition.” Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 139.

For should we approach the charm of this Flower-life—a charm rich in imagination and genius—in which its whole environment and all its relations are permeated by the rose-breath of the Soul, and the World is transformed into a Garden of Love—should we look at it more closely, and examine it in the light of Human Dignity and Freedom—the more attractive the first sight of it had been, so much the more unworthy shall we ultimately find it in every respect.<sup>23</sup>

Hegel argues that while the beauty of Indian thought is akin to the “delirious bliss in Opium,”<sup>24</sup> it is “somnambular,”<sup>25</sup> an accidental *unconscious*, coming-together, though “rich in imagination and genius.” “The dreaming Indian is therefore all that we call finite and individual; and, at the same time—as infinitely universal and unlimited—a something intrinsically divine,”<sup>26</sup> where the separation between individual and the absolute is already dissolved, the individual left without concrete personality and the rest of world no more a rationally connected system of objective relations.

For Hegel, this defies reason and logic. It also defies moral sentiment: after detailing the defects of a pantheistic worldview, Hegel asserts that in Indian thought we find a lack of “recognition of freedom and inward morality.”<sup>27</sup> In support of this claim, Hegel provides a sharp critique of Indian thought arising mainly from his understanding of the caste system, the “degrading spiritual serfdom,”<sup>28</sup> but also the lack of written history, the constant subjugation to despotic rule, and the externally enforced notions of moral principles as stripped of rationality, and unconscious political life. Reducing the plurality of Indian experiences down to Brahminical Hinduism, Hegel caricatures India’s past, attributing the abrupt movement from “the Meanest to the Highest” (from all that is superficial, empty, and trivial to that which is beautiful and uplifting) to a maverick fancy.<sup>29</sup> He also forces out a totally static conception that complements well the missionary propaganda he often relied upon.

<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 140.

<sup>24</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 167.

<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 144.

<sup>28</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 144.

<sup>29</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 155.

On the other hand, insofar as he touches on central farcical and corrosive tenets of Brahminism, Hegel's critique is not completely dissimilar from a long history of other pre-eminent Indian critics of the origins, perpetuation, and persistence of caste in India, from Buddha, Kabir, Ravidas, Tukaram, Guru Nanak—all either scarcely known or unknown to Hegel—to his contemporary, Jyotirao Phule, to recent pioneers such as Periyar, Iyothee Thass, and B. R. Ambedkar.

The absolute knowledge that Hegel proposes forms a recapitulation of the human spirit, for each successive stage retains elements of the previous ones as it goes beyond them. This then can suffice neither with mere sentimental intuition nor with mechanical empty reason.

# Hegel's India Writings

## Art, Religion, and Philosophy

Cop 663 [to a shirt]: *Lonely? You look like a mess. Cold? I'll warm  
you up* [irons it].

—From the film *Chungking Express*, 1994

### Fantastic Symbolism: Fine Art in India

What immediately faces us here are the forms of a fermenting fantasy, which in the restlessness of its fantastic dreams merely indicates the path which conducts us to the real center of symbolical art. In the first appearance of the distinguishing relation between significance and the mode of its presentation, both the severation and the association are still grasped in a confused manner.... These peoples consequently, through their confused intermingling of the Finite and the Absolute, in which the logical order and permanence of the prosaic facts of ordinary consciousness are disregarded altogether, despite all the profusion and extraordinary boldness of their conceptions, fall into a levity of fantastic mirage which is quite as remarkable, a flightiness which dances from the most spiritual and profoundest matters to the meanest trifle of present experience, in order that it may interchange and confuse immediately the one extreme with the other.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 47–50.

On the other hand, insofar as he touches on central farcical and corrosive tenets of Brahminism, Hegel's critique is not completely dissimilar from a long history of other pre-eminent Indian critics of the origins, perpetuation, and persistence of caste in India, from Buddha, Kabir, Ravidas, Tukaram, Guru Nanak—all either scarcely known or unknown to Hegel—to his contemporary, Jyotirao Phule, to recent pioneers such as Periyar, Iyothee Thass, and B. R. Ambedkar.

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 47–50.

Chapter 3 of the Texts section consists of selections of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Fine Art*. In interrogating what constitutes the beautiful in Indian art, Hegel suggests that it dwells in the *fantastic symbolic*, that is, products of sublime imagination—which, maintaining the progressive-historical schema from his history, form only the beginnings of art. This unconscious, tenderly sensuous, wondrous infancy is significant as a necessary step in the history of Spirit, but for that selfsame reason it turns out to be far from the formal elevation towards “unstaggering”<sup>2</sup> conceptual/spiritual thinking, marked by a “soberness” or “prosaic reasonableness” that the Indian conception of beauty appears to lack.<sup>3</sup> Hegel argues that such supposed unity and confusing intermingling of the “Absolute and its externally envisaged existence” (or sensuous perception) requires a *cleavage*. That would allow the Spirit, in the first place, to be confronted with the “task of *reclathing* with the material of fantasy for sensuous perception ... *under* the renewed mode of a spiritual product,” pointing towards the possibility of “real symbolism” or the genuine function of art.<sup>4</sup> Curiously, the “cleavage” alluded to in these lines, bringing forth the welcome separation, recalls Hegel's attachment to the sobering role of reason in general, specifically in volume 1 of *Fine Art*:

Indeed, under this aspect, the more art inspires men to emotions thus opposed, to that extent precisely it merely enlarges the *cleavage* in their feelings and passions, and sets them *staggering* about in Bacchantic riot.... This variety of the material of art itself compels us, therefore, not to remain satisfied.... Our rational nature forces its way into this motley array of discord, and demands to see the resurrection of a higher and

<sup>2</sup> In describing Indian art, Hegel uses the term “phantasie” not merely as imagination; it involves an element of “caprice,” resulting in the intoxicated “unsteady gait” of an attitude that conflates “spiritual universality” and “sensuous reality.” Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 49. In the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel referred to such beauty as “wild extravagance.” Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 47, 46; emphasis added.

more universal purpose from these elements despite their opposition, and to be conscious of its attainment.<sup>5</sup>

But this does not happen in the case of Indian art—it continues to drift in this “continuous bout of intoxication, this craze and condition of craze,”<sup>6</sup> and it is hard for Hegel to concede that this would be worthy of rational satisfaction. It is not that Hegel ignores the role of Indian art. Rather, he says that it

offers us no doubt, more particularly in its more sober delineation of that which is exclusively human, much that is endearing and benign, many gracious pictures and tender emotions, the most splendid and seductive descriptions of Nature, the most childlike traits of Love and naive innocence, and withal much too that is magnanimous and noble.<sup>7</sup>

But,

the spiritual is throughout rooted in [perceptual] sense, the meanest objects are placed on the same plane as the highest, true definition is wrecked, the Sublime is lowered to the conception of mere immeasurability, and that which is the original material of mythos for the most part vanishes before our eyes in the fantastic dreams of a restless and inquisitive imaginative power, and modes of shaping the same devoid of all intelligent purpose.<sup>8</sup>

In highlighting that distinct concepts are fused in fantastic imagination, Hegel works with the premise that for art to be possible, there must be a symbol pointing *towards*, expressing or *suggesting* the other; not by *being itself* the other, where the term “symbolic” would be superfluous

<sup>5</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 1, pp. 65–6; emphases added. In volume 1, Hegel does lay out the uplifting function of art: “As such a substantive end the conclusion of reflection is readily brought home to us that art possesses at once the power and function to *mitigate the savagery* of mere desires.” Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 1, p. 66; emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 56.

(under standard interpretation, a symbol would point *outwards*; it would be a symbol *of* X, and not X itself). In the Indian conception, by reducing one concept to another, the symbol appears to become its own object, a pervading unity which dissolves the distinction between identity and difference. In such a world, the possibility of real art seems to be definitionally precluded.

Hegel delineates his critique through three aspects. *First*, Hegel finds a contradiction in the very conception of the Absolute or Brahman. It is characterized by total abstraction, absolute universality, and an undifferentiated, wholly indefinite depiction with no particular content or personality. He says: "Brahman, taken in a general sense as this supreme Godhead, is absolutely removed from the sensuous and sense-perception, or rather is not even an object for Thought," such that it is not an "object that the imagination acting through the senses can reclothe for art."<sup>9</sup>

Further, the union and identity of human personality with Brahman is nothing apart from an empty, abstract, and *unconscious* mode. In fact, this unity is the highest end of life where ultimate freedom means that eventually all determinations will cease in a tranquil universe left without attributes and self-consciousness. Such vacuous unity motivated by self-annihilation and dissolution cannot be an object for imagination or art. Hegel argues that *self-consciousness* (not unconscious dissolution) is inseparable from thought, which posits itself as an object of thought, in order that it leads to self-knowledge, the basis of every intelligible, rational (here, aesthetic) judgment.

At the same time, and *second*, the Absolute is marked through a completely concrete determination, richly described in an idiosyncratic, sensuous, finite, personified, creative imagination of *particular* worldly objects, as though those particular things in themselves, with their specific forms and limitations, could represent the infinite content of the Absolute entirely, and adequately.

Thus, according to Hegel, the Indian imagination is founded on two extremes. Consequently, the forms through which Hindu art manifests itself are confounding:

- (a) Divinity and worldliness come together, constituting the irrational combination of the sacred (or celestial/infinite) and the profane (or mundane/finite). The prancing apes, the stolid bovine, the sages,

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 50.

Brahma, Rama, and Krishna are all depicted in their average everydayness capable of preserving their supreme might and beatific glory. In their ordinariness, and “point of singularity, the infinite content of the Absolute is envisaged and adored.”<sup>10</sup>

Hegel says that in the *Ramayana*, for example, “the friend of Rama, namely, the prince of apes Hanuman, is a principal personage, and he accomplishes the bravest of exploits. And generally we may observe that among the Hindus the ape is revered as Divine, and we find, in fact, an entire city of apes.”<sup>11</sup>

Sacred epics such as the *Ramayana* are shown to be composed around banal descriptions, such as:

Brahma has come on a visit to Valmiki, the mythical bard of the *Ramayana*. Valmiki receives him entirely in the common Hindu fashion, pays him a compliment or two, places a stool before him, and supplies him with water and fruits. Brahma sits down just like anybody else and constrains his host to do likewise: and there they sit on and sit on until at last Brahma orders Valmiki to compose the poem of the *Ramayana*.<sup>12</sup>

It is odd that Hegel here does not seem to take into account the metaphorical, allegorical representations of mythologies commonly used by many literary traditions. But such an uncharitable reading is consistent with the constant differentiation Hegel seeks to achieve. It is in his interest to distinguish the Indian aesthetic from the Greek one, as this continues to undermine the Romantics’ tendency to glorify the former at the expense of the latter—a practice that a classicist and conservative-leaning philosopher such as Hegel cannot abide.

- (b) Indian art in attempting to capture the universality of the Absolute resorts to a “*measureless* extension of its images.”<sup>13</sup> Hegel says:

Particular shapes are drawn out into colossal and grotesque proportions.... This is the cause of all that extravagant exaggeration of size, not merely in the case of spatial dimension, but also of

<sup>10</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 51–2.

<sup>12</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 52–3.

<sup>13</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 53.

measurelessness of time durations, or the reduplication of particular determinations, as in figures with many heads, arms, and so on.... The egg, for example, contains the bird within it. This particular fact is enlarged to the measureless conception of a world-egg secreting the universal life of all creation, and in which Brahma, the procreating God, accomplishes without effort the year of creation, until by virtue of his thought alone the two halves of the egg fall asunder.<sup>14</sup>

Again, natural objects, human individuals, and events are exalted in that they may express the significance of truly Divine action, but both divine and human attributions seem to "run in a continual confusion backwards and forwards into one another."<sup>15</sup> Hegel cites an illustration in Kalidasa's poem *Shakuntala*:

At first we have set before us the most gentle and odorous realm of Love, in which everything goes on its way in an entirely human fashion; and then we are all at once snatched from the wealth of this genuine world, and transported into the clouds of the heaven of Indra, where everything suffers change, and our formerly circumscribed sphere is inflated to the measure of the universal import of Nature's life in its relation to the Brahmin and the power of Nature's gods.<sup>16</sup>

- (c) The Indian imagination consists of a plurality of divinities, based on *human* personifications and representations drawn from nature, and to highlight this aspect, Hegel describes the concept of Trimurti, the triformed Godhead—something he refers to in almost all his major works:

This Deity includes in the first place *Brahma*, the activity which brings forth and procreates, the creator of the world, Lord of all the gods ... On the one hand he is to be kept distinct from Brahman (as Neuter), that is from the ultimate Being, and is the first-born of such. In another aspect, however, he again seems to fall into union with this abstract Godhead ... he is formed with four heads and four hands, and with the latter are his sceptre and ring. He is of a red color, an obvious

<sup>14</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 53–4.

<sup>15</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, pp. 54–5.

suggestion of sunlight, since these Divinities invariably carry qualities which are of universal significance in Nature and which are thus personified in them. The *second* Deity of this triune Trimurti, is Vishnu, the preserving Godhead, the *third* Shiva, the destructive Power. The symbols employed to represent these gods are countless. For by reason of the universality of the significances they express they comprehend an infinite number of varied activities. In part these are related to particular phenomena of Nature, mainly the elementary, such as, for example, the quality of "fiery," which is an attribute of Vishnu.<sup>17</sup>

In such finite and specific determinations, it is difficult to see how the absolute quality of the infinite might be preserved. Hegel stresses this in these lines by pointing at the possible conflation in imagining the absolute formlessness of Brahman and the specific modes of Trimurti.

*Third*, and finally, pantheism shows that because of its conflicted unity there is no reconciliation between the sensuous finite (mode of art or sense perception) and the abstract infinite (the Absolute or the object of art). However "preoccupied the Hindu imagination may be in its efforts to contort the sensuous phenomenon into a plurality of Divinities," it seeks, in all earnestness, the "spiritual abstraction of a God supreme over all, in contrast with whom the particular, sensuous, and phenomenal is undivine, inadequate, and consequently is apprehended as something negative, something which has finally to be canceled." Thus, in poems, such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as also many other works of art, we see that "art is ... never tired of representing, in every imaginable way, the surrender of the sensuous and the power of spiritual abstraction and self-absorption."<sup>18</sup>

Yet, insofar as Indian art looks *beyond* sensuous content, it marks the beginnings of art. Real symbolism in fine art consists in that "the significance which it seeks to embody should not merely be set forth but that this significance should itself be independent and *free* from the *immediate* sensuous content."<sup>19</sup> It is in this that Indian art can be seen as a primal and fundamental stage, indicating, but not itself exemplifying, the possibility of real art.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 65.

Thus, the formula laid out already in Hegel's philosophy of history has here programatically been applied to art; it remains, then, to apply the same systematic evaluation also to religion and to philosophy.

### Curse of Nature: On Indian Religion

The affirmative connection in the earlier forms of religion exists in part only in this pure absorption, in which the subject says, "I am Brahma," but it is an absolutely abstract connection, which only exists by means of this stupefaction, this relinquishment of all concrete actuality of Spirit, by means of negation. This affirmative connection is merely, as it were, a simple thread; for the rest, it is the abstract negative, this sacrifice, this self-immolation; that is to say, instead of connection there is merely *flight from the concrete*.<sup>20</sup>

In *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Chapter 4 of the Texts section), in speaking of natural religion or the religion of imagination or fantasy, Hegel argues that a whimsical, uncontrolled pantheism lies at the heart of it: everything is divine; all is one. The abstract is "One substantial Power," the subject of religion.<sup>21</sup> This is strangely coupled with a description of a world, a phenomenal world, or the world of varied appearance. In Indian thought, Hegel encounters a baffling fork: at one end, there is the abstract One, at the other we have "the wildness of extravagant imagination,"<sup>22</sup> conditioned by particular, independent worldly objects, the chaotic brightness of the multitude, the world of senses, *unthought* and unconsidered.

To Hegel, this is the sign that Indian religion has not fully developed, for central to a free, self-conscious religion is the fact that the absolute universal power delineated in it is not known only as an aggregate of determinations which merely *are*, but in turning the manifold determinateness of existence into the unity of inner self-determination. This emphasis on self-determination marks the beginning of spirituality.

<sup>20</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. Osmaston, vol. 2, p. 72; emphasis added.

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 3.



Much to Hegel's distaste, everything in this pantheistic world, "even the freedom of man itself, has merely a negative, accidental character,"<sup>23</sup> while the supreme crown belongs to the power of the Absolute, the universal, or Brahman, which cannot by definition be characterized in terms of specific qualities, be self-determined or self-conscious, and is thus lacking in the realization of pure freedom. It may be described, Hegel says, as "characterless nothingness."<sup>24</sup>

In other words, while this form of religion takes a step towards abstraction in conceiving of the abstract universal (away from the everyday immediacy of senses), which is of course a good thing, it fails to do so *thoughtfully*—prevented thus from blossoming into the concrete, self-reflexive, spiritual unity which might have a real notion of freedom.

Recall Hegel's insistence in the *Philosophy of History*, and elsewhere, that the freedom of Spirit which constitutes its *essence*, cannot be thought of as an accident of Nature, a mere caprice. This freedom can be realized only through reflecting, understanding, or the process of self-consciousness. Since neither the objects of the world are free, nor can the absolute universal substance adequately formulate to itself the thought that "I am free," Indian religion is unable to reach its highest potential, and continues to dwell in a primitive stage of development.

The pantheistic religions belong in natural religion, where the individual moments are kept independent and separate, and eventually therefore all fall apart. The moments merely *are*. However, in actuality, not only do we say things *are*; it must be added that they stand in manifold relation to one another, that they have causal connection. To see the connection of things in the world, which is the work of understanding, is absent here. This, Hegel says, is the *curse of nature*:

Everywhere we shall find tones that accord with the Notion, with the True, which, however, become the more horrible in the strain as a whole because they continue to retain the character of separateness or mutual exclusion, and because the moments, being independent and objective in their particularity, are looked upon theoretically.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 65.

<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, pp. 3–4.

This abstract multitude Hegel terms "the bad or false infinite."<sup>26</sup> The phenomenal world, as well as the divine world, is therefore drawn into the service of imagination and emotion, not reason. It becomes the abode of an exuberant nature characterized by a "strain of voluptuous and sweet loveliness, but at the same time of feeble softness."<sup>27</sup> Hegel argues that this is not even a mark of pure beauty, "for the Beautiful is essentially the Spiritual making itself known sensuously,"<sup>28</sup> where the sensuous is completely permeated by the spiritual, has its meaning solely and exclusively in and through the Spiritual, and is not just a reckless expression of imagination. "To beauty of form belongs free subjectivity, which in the sensuous world and in concrete existence is both free and knows itself to be so."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Hegel finds in Indian religious symbolism "the unbeautiful, the mad, the fantastic character of the art."<sup>30</sup> These have not yet been passed through the sieve of "prose" and reflexive thinking. As a result, we find an "undeveloped state of Substance which is not as yet spiritual Substance."<sup>31</sup> Hegel argues, quite unequivocally, that the fundamental basis, in every form of religion, is that "God is essentially Spirit"; on the contrary, we see in Indian religion depictions of God in a natural existence.

The natural thing is presented in a human fashion, and also as personality, as spirit, as consciousness; but the deities of the Hindus are still superficial personifications—the personification by no means implies that the object, God, is known as Spirit. It is these particular objects, the sun, a tree, which are personified. The incarnations of the deities,

<sup>26</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 5.

too, have their place here; the particular objects have, however, an independence, and because they are particular and natural objects the independence is only a fictitious one.<sup>32</sup>

Hegel says that this religious attitude, where nature “reels at the mercy of imagination,”<sup>33</sup> with nothing to support or give it stability, seeks an anchor. This anchor would be the subsumption of the bodily sensuous element under the spiritual proper, which “relates itself as within itself to itself, and it relates itself to the Things.”<sup>34</sup> But Indian thought still dwells in the “region of caprice, confusion, and feebleness, into this measureless splendor and enervation.”<sup>35</sup> The subject—the spiritual agent—becomes an empty form, and the content of religious mythology, sculptures, or pictures cannot be treated as spiritual. This is because those powers, whether general natural objects or the forces of individual feeling, “such as the sun, mountains, rivers,” “abstract ideas, such as origination, decay, change, assumption of form,” or love and beauty are not as yet intelligently distinguished by the understanding of Spirit.<sup>36</sup> They all seem to take individual places in the world, with little objective content.

Hegel concludes this prong of attack thus:

From what has now been stated it will be already clear that these determinations of the divine Essence have their existence in the Indian religion. We have here to look away from its vast and characteristically endless mythology and mythological forms, in order to keep to the principal fundamental determinations alone, which are on the one hand *baroque* and wild, and are horrible, repulsive, loathsome distortions, but at the same time prove themselves to have the

<sup>32</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 68.

<sup>33</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 5.

Notion for their inner source; while in virtue of the development which it gets in this theoretical region, they recall the highest element of the Idea.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, Hegel's critique of the Hindu religion as natural religion highlights how the "immediacy" of aesthetic intuition is broken up in religious representation. It indicates that, in fact, fantasy, as in Hindu religion, acts as a bridge between intuition and thought, where the representation of the self-unfolding Spirit is objectified to itself, albeit in a merely pictorial manner.

After a discussion of the conception of natural religion, Hegel inquires into the nature of the absolute universal, Brahman, in order to discuss what may be considered the content or subject of this stage of religious development:

What is the first in the Notion, what is true, the universal substantial element, is the eternal repose of Being-within-itself; this Essence existing within itself. This simple Substance, which the Hindus call Brahma, is regarded as the Universal, the self-existing Power; which is not, like passion, turned toward what is other than itself, but is the quiet, luster-less reflection into itself, which is, however, at the same time determined as Power.<sup>38</sup>

Further,

Brahma exists thus as abstractly existing for himself. The Power and the basis of existences and all things have, in fact, proceeded out of him and vanished in him. In saying to himself, "I am Brahma", all things have vanished back into him, have vanished in him.<sup>39</sup>

Also, "Out of Brahma issues everything,—gods, the world, mankind; but it at once becomes apparent that this One is inactive."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, pp. 10–11.

<sup>38</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 16. See the *Nasadiya Sukta* (*na asat*: "not the non-existent") or the Hymn of Creation (*Rigveda* 10.129.1).

These descriptions lead Hegel into a detailed examination of Indian cosmogony, which he sketches as follows:

There was neither Being nor nothing, neither above nor below, neither death nor immortality, but only the One enshrouded and dark. Outside of this One existed nothing, and this brooded in solitude with itself; through the energy of contemplation it brought forth a world out of itself; in thinking, desire, impulse first formed itself, and this was the original seed of all things.<sup>41</sup>

In *Religion*, and as we saw in *Fine Art*, Hegel launches into a remarkably lengthy discussion on the nature of the trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, their individual characterization—whether they can be construed as abstract, independent from each other, as personalized deities, the nature of their divinity, whether there are incarnations, and how they are different from “Brahman,” the universal substance, the neuter. Hegel appears to be astonished by the possibility of how close this conception could have been to Christianity. Hence, his disapproval and admiration wind up together: “[T]he most striking and the greatest feature in Indian mythology is unquestionably this Trinity in unity.”<sup>42</sup>

Hegel summarizes:

The First, namely, Brahma, is the most distant unity, the self-enclosed unity; the Second, Vishnu, is manifestation (the moments of Spirit are thus far not to be mistaken), is life in human form. The Third should be the return to the First, in order that the unity might appear as returning into itself. But it is just this Third which is what is devoid of Spirit ... thus the fundamental characteristic of Shiva is on the one hand the prodigious life-force, on the other what destroys, devastates; the wild energy of natural life.<sup>43</sup>

A further strand of Hegel's assessment of Indian religion covers praxis, including worship, ritual, and social order. He begins with

<sup>41</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 23.

a transition from the triune Godhead to Brahma specifically. He points out:

Brahma is this One, the abstraction of thought, and to the extent to which a man puts himself into the condition of self-concentration, he is Brahma. Brahma himself is not worshipped; the One God has no temple, has no worship, and no prayer is addressed to him.<sup>44</sup>

Hegel conscientiously analyzes the statement "I am Brahma," an idea at the core of Indian religion and philosophy. Starkly, this statement would have a connection to the classical notion of freedom. He notes how

if a Hindu were asked whether he worships idols, he would answer without the least hesitation, "Yes, I worship idols." If, on the other hand, we were to ask a Hindu, whether learned or unlearned, "Do you worship the Supreme Being, Paramesvara? Do you pray to Him? Do you bring Him offerings?," he would then say, "Never." If we were to inquire further, "What is this tranquil devotion, this silent meditation which is enjoined on you and which you practice?" He would then reply, "When I engage in prayer, sit down, cross my legs over one another, fold my hands, and look toward heaven, and concentrate my spirit and my thoughts without speaking, I then say within myself, 'I am Brahma, the Supreme Being.'"<sup>45</sup>

Accordingly,

The highest point which is thus attained to in worship is that union with God which consists in the annihilation and *stupefaction* of self-consciousness. This is not affirmative liberation and reconciliation, but is, on the contrary, wholly negative, complete abstraction.<sup>46</sup>

But

the freedom of man just consists in being with himself—not in emptiness, but in willing, knowing, acting. To the Hindu, on the contrary, the

<sup>44</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 34; emphasis added.

complete submergence and *stupefaction* of the consciousness is what is highest, and he who maintains himself in this abstraction and has died to the world is called a yogi.<sup>47</sup>

The lack of separation between he who is worshiped and he who worships in religion remains for Hegel a point yet to be reconciled. In describing religious life in India, in numerous passages, Hegel steps into a discussion of caste, to present both its inspiring glory and precipitous disgrace:

Brahmans, those born again, twice born through birth, first naturally, and then as thinking men. This is a profound idea. The thought of man is looked upon here as the source of his second existence, the root of his true existence, which he gives to himself by means of freedom.<sup>48</sup>

Hegel says that by right of birth, "the caste of the Brahmans is an immediate representation of the presence of Brahma; it is the duty of that caste to read the Vedas, to withdraw itself into itself." Also, "their deeds consist in giving utterance to Brahma." At the same time, they are bequeathed with unfair "unbounded reverence" such that compared to them no other men are of value.<sup>49</sup>

If any one who is of a lower caste touch a Brahman, he has by the very act incurred death. In the Code of Manu penalties are to be found for offenses against Brahmans. If, for example, a Shudra utter abusive language to a Brahman, an iron staff, ten inches long, is thrust glowing into his mouth; and if he attempt to instruct a Brahman, hot oil is poured into his mouth and into his ears.<sup>50</sup>

Hence, Hegel avers, religious life in India consists of a number of rituals and superstitions which are not amenable to reason, are

<sup>47</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, pp. 18, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 40.

unconscious, and often repulsive and grotesque. These practices are ascribed with value, almost always negatively: austerity, starvation, sacrifice, which make it seem as though among the Hindus "human life is despised."

From this results that aspect of Hindu worship according to which men sacrifice themselves, and parents their children. To this is due, too, the burning of wives after the death of their husbands. Such sacrifices have a higher value when they take place with express reference to Brahma, or to any god whatever.<sup>51</sup>

This, however, expresses no freedom, and such a life could have no intrinsic worth. It is not celebrated for the value of its own; it is driven neither by morality, nor good customs, nor freedom. Therefore, and here Hegel is most disparaging:

Just as superstition is of limitless extent owing to this want of freedom, so too it follows that no morality, no determination of freedom, no rights, no duties have any place here, so that the people of India are sunk in the most complete immorality. Since no rational determination has been able to attain to solidity, the entire condition of this people could never become a legitimate one, a condition inherently justified, and was always merely a condition on sufferance, a contingent and a perverted one.<sup>52</sup>

Hegel argues that the foundation of superstition lies in that "man is not indifferent toward external things; and he is not so if he has no freedom within himself, if he has not the true independence of Spirit. All that is indifferent is fixed, while all that is not indifferent, all that belongs to right and morality, is thrown away and abandoned to caprice."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 46.

<sup>52</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 47.

<sup>53</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 47.



In fact, it appears that not just life, activity itself is despised, for the highest ideal is "stupefaction," where all determinateness vanishes, all differences are annulled, and what remains is a peaceful ocean devoid of content.<sup>54</sup> Such an empty abstraction is certainly not life-affirming: for Hegel, it would be against human values, meaning, agency or activity; in other words, life itself. In contrast, for several Indian schools of thought, "contentlessness" (which for them is tantamount to "absolute" knowledge) across pure existence-consciousness-bliss is an ideal or an end to be pursued in itself.

The Indian religion gives way to other religions, such as Persian, Syrian, and Egyptian, by being the primal representative of natural religions (it is worth noticing the familiar idiom Hegel employs to characterize Indian religion, in providing a comparison):

[T]he characteristic common to these three forms of religion is the resumption of *wild, unrestrained totality* into concrete unity. This *giddy whirl*, in which the determinations of unity are precipitated into externality and contingency, where out of unity, as out of Brahma, this *wild notionless world* of deities proceeds, and where the development, because it is not proportionate to the unity, breaks up into *confusion* this state, devoid of anything to give it steadfastness, has now passed away.<sup>55</sup>

Hegel argues, in providing a contrast with the Persian religion of the good or light:

But with this affirmative connection, where determinate existence is taken up into universality, it is stated that things themselves are good ... they are from the very first received into favour; it is not that a part

<sup>54</sup> "All life and all relations of concrete actual life to the One are to be renounced. The entire living Present, whether that of natural life or of spiritual life, of the family, of the State, of art, of religion, is dissolved in the pure negativity of abstract selflessness." This ultimate goal which is to be sought in worship "is that union with God which consists in the annihilation and stupefaction of self-consciousness." Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, pp. 69–70; emphases added.

only are these twice-born, as in India.... Good is so determined within itself; the particular things are good, they serve their own purpose, are adequate to themselves, not merely to an Other. The Good is not for them a "Beyond," — Brahma again.<sup>56</sup>

Despite this, Hegel would concede that every moment in human history has value for the next. In fact, religion could not have been fully "developed" in India because Hegel already knew what he was looking for, *something* he would not yet find!

At the former stages it is the empirical self-consciousness immersed in itself which is Brahma, this abstraction within self, or, in other words, the Highest is present as a human being. Thus substantial unity is still inseparable from the subject, and in so far as it is still something imperfect, is not as yet in its very nature subjective unity; it still has the subject outside of it. The objectivity of the Absolute, the consciousness of its independence in its own right, is not present. Here this breach between subjectivity and objectivity takes place for the first time, and it is here that objectivity for the first time properly deserves the name of God; and we have this objectivity of God here because this content has determined itself by its own act to be potentially concrete totality. The meaning of this is that God is a Spirit, that God is the Spirit in all religions.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, Hegel admits that in the transition from natural religion to the religion of freedom, the role of Indian religion cannot be discounted:

This transition to spiritual religion contains, it is true, concrete subjectivity within itself; it is, however, the free, unregulated play of this simple subjectivity; it is the development of it, yet a development which is still, as it were, in a wild and effervescent state, and has not as yet arrived at a state of tranquility, at the true spirituality which is essentially free.

Religion then turns out to be like Indian poetry: "beautiful ... but it always rests upon the craziest foundation; we are attracted by its

<sup>56</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, pp. 69–70.

<sup>57</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 67.

loveliness, and repelled by the confusion and nonsense in it.”<sup>58</sup> If only Hegel had been capable of recognizing the true universality of his claim. It certainly describes well his own foray into Indian religion.

### Stale Gossip of Oneness: India in the *Encyclopedia*

Chapter 5 of the Texts section, ‘The Philosophy of Mind’ (*Encyclopedia*, Part III), evinces the development of Hegel’s pet peeve: empty abstraction and undetermined unity. This chapter lays out Hegel’s reflections on pantheism and atheism with specific reference to how they fare against speculative philosophy, while dealing with the foremost problem of religion’s “reciprocal” relationship with philosophy.<sup>59</sup>

Hegel summarizes the tussle as follows:

The charge of *Atheism*, which used often to be brought against philosophy (that it has *too little* of God), has grown rare: the more widespread grows the charge of *Pantheism*, that it has *too much* of him.<sup>60</sup>

To detail this point, Hegel explains the two warring attitudes: vain and empty rationality on the part of philosophy and “pithless orthodoxy” in the case of religion.<sup>61</sup> He weighs both options carefully, and then trudges his way through the “All-one” doctrine of pantheism, wherein all is one, and all is God—a charge against philosophical thinking Hegel is most determined to refute. Not surprisingly, he strongly

<sup>58</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Speirs and Sanderson, vol. 2, p. 43.

<sup>59</sup> To Hegel, this reciprocity consists in the reverse proportionality of an attitude in the other: while one rises, the other stoops. These two opposed forms of thinking about God are: speculative thought (philosophical) as distinct from reflecting mental representation, or pictorial (representative forms of religious) thinking. Hegel acknowledges, of course, that viewing these very categories is possible because of philosophical thinking. A considered assesment would show to Hegel that the content of both religion and philosophy is in fact the same: and further, it is not subjective, prone to mere chance, fancy, or accident. Religion, as he says, “is the truth *for all men*,” as would be the philosophical method. *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 182.

<sup>60</sup> *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 183.

<sup>61</sup> *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 183.

argues in favor of an idea of God "deeply determinate in itself," which he finds most conceptions lack.<sup>62</sup> He points out that an overview of history shows that all religions have the conception of an abstract or general god, no matter how absurd: "Hindu to asses, cows—or to dalai-lamas—that of the Egyptians to the ox."<sup>63</sup> However, they are at fault in that they ultimately "stop short of defining substance as *subject and as mind*," and hence according to Hegel, they are not fully developed.<sup>64</sup>

In discussing this complex issue, Hegel examines instances of Indian thought, suggesting that while they may share their *content*, it is in their *form* that speculative or conceptual thinking significantly differs from pantheistic, representative or reflective understanding.

Hegel points out that the modes of pictorial conception issue from the need of all philosophies and religions to formulate an idea of (a) God and (b) the relationship of God and the world. One of the ways to address this is to subscribe to the identity of God and the world, the pantheistic view. However, this view does not quite take the next step: of *explaining* that identity. Hegel insists on pursuing "the *special mode* in which the unity is *qualified*."<sup>65</sup> Unlike the physicist, it is not enough to describe the *composition* of the idea of God. What *relations* each of the elements contained there express is crucial from the philosophical point of view, and must be confronted. In not fully understanding God's relation to the world, some are quick to attribute omnipresence, providence, and so on. But to Hegel's mind, such characterization is unsatisfactory. An "undigested" or unreflected thought of identity leaves it "dry" and "shallow",<sup>66</sup> such divine unity is far from concrete—it is indeterminate:

But to put that sort of thing, this *stale gossip of oneness or identity*, on the shoulders of philosophy, shows such recklessness about justice and truth.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 188.

<sup>63</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 184.

<sup>64</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 192; emphasis added.

<sup>65</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 193; emphases added.

<sup>66</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, pp. 193, 194.

<sup>67</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 195; emphasis added.

Hegel finds the most poetic and “sublime” expression of pantheism in the oriental poets and he cites Krishna’s words in the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

I am the self, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end also of all beings ... I am the beaming sun amongst the shining ones, and the moon among the lunar mansions ... Amongst the Vedas I am the Sama-Veda: I am mind amongst the senses: I am consciousness in living beings. And I am Shankara (Shiva) among the Rudra ... Meru among the high-topped mountains ... the Himalaya among the firmly-fixed (mountains) ... Among beasts I am the lord of beasts ... Among letters I am the letter A ... I am the spring among the seasons ... I am also that which is the seed of all things: there is nothing moveable or immoveable which can exist without me.<sup>68</sup>

Here, Krishna is spoken of as the supreme Spirit, while Indra, Shiva, and other gods (who may have been extolled elsewhere) seem to melt away into insignificance. Individual sensuous existence of the many-hued things in the world is affirmed at the same time as the One essential substance. As Hegel puts it in his inimitable style, we see the “infinitely-manifold sensuous manifold of the finite,”<sup>69</sup> but this appears to coincide with something quite opposite! For there is also a higher conception of Brahma (Brahman) in Indian thought, the pure unity of thought in itself, akin to Hegel’s progressive Aristotelian ideal. A unity in which all things empirical, the panoramic sensuous manifold, all rifting differences, the rising blue mountains, vibrant flight of seasons, the majesty of beasts, the glinting sheet of starry skies, and grandeur of particular gods and divinities disappear or submerge.

As a result, Hegel finds that Hindu philosophy is “*split* between the featureless unity of abstract thought, on one hand, and on the other, the long-winded weary story of its particular detail.”<sup>70</sup> In saying so, Hegel grants both abstraction and concretion to Indian philosophy, but not in the measure and balance he would prefer. He is thus left with “only a monstrous inconsistency,” a strange monotheistic account, as also “the maddest of polytheisms.”<sup>71</sup> This disconcerts him.

<sup>68</sup> Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 186.

<sup>69</sup> Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 188.

<sup>70</sup> Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 189; emphasis added.

<sup>71</sup> Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Wallace, p. 188.

In fact, it emerges that Hegel's system (unlike the representative thinking he identifies as Indian philosophy), while retaining the infinite content of religion, dialectically develops in such a way that the finite form transforms into the infinite. Pantheistic substance or substantial unity is thereby counterpoised against conceptual unity. The outcome of pantheism turns out, for Hegel, to be mere expression of a simple, empty, abstract identity—not the true, concrete, self-determining Idea that evolves through a necessarily inner logic and is a function of conceptual unity. But Hegel's treatment of Indian philosophy is not exhausted by the *Encyclopedia*. He has a great deal more to say. In this endeavor, Hegel delves more deeply into specific systems of Indian philosophy than any other major nineteenth- or twentieth-century philosopher to routinely appear on academic philosophy syllabi throughout the Western world.

### Dry, Dead Understanding: Indian Philosophy

The beautiful, the holy, the eternal, religion, and love are the bait that is required to arouse the desire to bite. Not the Concept but ecstasy, not the *coldly progressing necessity* of the subject matter but fermenting enthusiasm is held to be the best attitude and guide to the spread-out riches of the substance.

In line with such demands one exerts oneself almost zealously and angrily to tear men out of their absorption in the sensuous, the vulgar, the particular, and to raise their sights to the stars as if, utterly forgetful of the divine, they were at the point of satisfying themselves with dust and water, like worms.<sup>72</sup>

It is worth considering that Hegel's anger (directed primarily at the Romantics on their obsession with sensuous ecstasy and enthusiasm) in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* reveals what he sets out to say in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Chapter 6 of the Texts section of this volume), even though the writings are separated by many years. Again, however, the reader will find a contradiction. While he would seem to be engaged in denouncing the particular here in favor of the "coldly progressing necessity" of the universal Spirit, it becomes

<sup>72</sup> Hegel, "Preface to Phenomenology," in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Text and Commentary*, ed. Kaufmann, p. 16; emphasis added.

apparent through the following discussion that Hegel's central objection to Indian philosophical thought is its very "*destruction of all that is particular*."<sup>73</sup> We have alluded to this point before. In fact, Hegel's mature thought requires both universality and particularity—and in Indian thought he finds both in their intricate and transcendent expression. Yet he declares these descriptions skewed, staggering, and unstable, and not enough to propel the history of philosophy. While Indian philosophy has sublime universality, it renders it at the same time with such flattening homogeneity (dissolving every particular individual in it) that it lacks the specific multitudinous richness of mediated consciousness. While Indian philosophy has the profoundest particularity, it has simply too much of it—extensive and bedazzling, artistic, romantic, and sentimental, full of descriptions of qualities and imaginations, nearly trite, confusing and unnecessary, even blind, losing the overarching vision of the conceptual whole, the philosophical abstraction informed by notions of real understanding, reason, logic, and freedom.

What place does Indian thought occupy in the history of philosophy? For Hegel, while oriental history (the *so-called Oriental philosophy*) is the "first" in the history of philosophy—one which has developed the "form" of thought to a considerable extent—it is a thought that is *unfree*, both politically and objectively. It is therefore excluded from the body of the history of philosophy. Its position is "preliminary": although the Spirit arises, or is born, there—this is so because such a form, according to Hegel, would be inadequate to hold the concept of Spirit, the impersonal universal substance that expresses the philosophical spirit of reason, the concrete and absolute Idea.

Hegel cites several (intertwined) reasons for this claim, which we enumerate as follows.<sup>74</sup> Indian philosophy represents a stage where:

- (a) "the spirit of subjectivity reigns";
- (b) "individual consciousness" is absent;
- (c) individuality lacks "real freedom";

<sup>73</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 119; emphasis added.

<sup>74</sup> Hegel writes, "The first Philosophy in order is the so-called Oriental," Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 117. For a detailed critique, see pp. 117–19, 146.

- (d) philosophy is identical to "the religious mode of thought," or religion as such ("objects to which attention is devoted in Philosophy are the same as those which we find brought forward in Religion" and the Vedas (the sacred texts) also form the general groundwork for philosophy);
- (e) even "religious ideas are not individualized";
- (f) despite the presence of individual forms of divinities, such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, "because freedom is wanting the individuality is not real, but merely superficial";
- (g) "God, the essentially existent, the eternal, is comprehended somewhat in the light of universal," immersed in the indeterminate universality of essence;
- (h) the relation of individuals to God is similar: "the first condition is that only the one substance shall, as such, be the true, and that the individual neither can have within himself, nor can he attain to any value in as far as he maintains himself as against the being in and for itself";
- (i) there is "destruction of all that is particular";
- (j) ultimately, "unity with the substantial" is valued;
- (k) the result is "dry understanding"; and
- (l) we find "mere enumeration of determinations," neither concrete and qualified understanding of relations nor the realization of their conceptual and logical import.

The critique is, in effect, primarily threefold: *first*, the absence of individuality/particularity, resulting in a featureless universal devoid of concrete determination; *second*, the conflation of religion and philosophy; and *third*, the lack of freedom.

The complete lack of recognition of individual freedom (where men do not know themselves to be free) and submersion in total universality is the greatest impediment in the development of history. Accordingly, Hegel's summation runs thus:

The destruction of all that is particular either is an illimitable, the exaltitude of the East, or, in so far as that which is posited and determined for itself is known, it is a *dry, dead understanding*, which cannot take up the speculative Notion into itself. To that which is true, this finite can exist only as immersed in substance; if kept apart from this it remains dead and arid.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 119; emphasis added.



This, then, recaps his consummate rejection of Indian thought, insofar as it is bound, not free, or *in concreto* because of caste; and, because it relates substance to subject and subject to substance *immediately*, without the dialectical *mediation* of Spirit unfolding itself over time.

But even just as the beginning, Hegel's India reflects his own thought as the end. Hegel took special pains to critique the beginning so that the end seemed distinct and worthwhile. The distinguishing features of the end, as we have seen, are: (a) the concretion of the universal, the subjectivity of the Absolute, or, in a phrase, the necessity of a totally dialectically mediated concept; and (b) freedom—that is, freedom of the subject being its identity with the abstract (characteristically found in Indian thought), but which must display concrete freedom, especially socio-political freedom (Hegel says, *that* the subject knows himself to be free,<sup>76</sup> and would constitute his or her own independence, has already been established in Greek and Christian societies). Thus, for Hegel, caste, for instance, would be the greatest evidence that Indian freedom and wisdom are not dialectically mediated, and remain an empty abstraction or “mere” universal: if the subject were really the Absolute, it would be recognized by all as inherently free, not as bound by mere custom and chained to caste.

While caste may be the practical manifestation of the disregard for freedom—hence Hegel's favorite example—he never lets go of the philosophical point about concrete determination. The lack of individual subjectivity in and for itself is indicative of a nomadic “lawlessness” that Hegel disapproves of. The superficial and “dry” understanding also reflects in “worship, which is complete immersion in devotion and then an endless number of ceremonials and of religious actions; and this on the other side is the exaltitude of that illimitable in which everything disappears.”<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> This is crucial because freedom, liberation, self-realization and its variants as such form the cornerstone of Indian philosophical thought. In subsequent discussions, this view may be compared to Hegel's examination of *telos* in Sankhya philosophy, where nature “performs the office of preparing the soul for its freedom,” allowing the soul to *distinguish from*, not identify with, primordial nature. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 140.

<sup>77</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 119.

Despite the fact that "the ancient glory of this land was held in the highest estimation even by the Greeks," and, Hegel acknowledges, its "culture is developed to a high degree, and it is imposing," its defect is that its "Philosophy is identical with its Religion."<sup>78</sup> We find therefore that the "holy books or Vedas also form the general groundwork for Philosophy," and in this respect Indian Philosophy "stands within Religion just as scholastic Philosophy stands within Christian dogmatism, having at its basis and presupposing the doctrines of the church."<sup>79</sup> This would appear to be one of the key objections to Hegel's mind, as with the ascribed superiority of the *universal* (for Hegel, synonymous with God or the object of religion) that disguises all that is particular: "Mythology takes the form of incarnation or individualization, from which it might be thought that it would be opposed to Philosophy in its universality and ideality"; but incarnation is not limited to a determinate individual, for almost everything falls within its fold, and thus mythology unites in philosophy: "The very thing that seems to define itself as individuality falls back directly within the mist of the universal."<sup>80</sup>

Given that there appears to be "one universal substance which may be laid hold of in the abstract or in the concrete, and out of which everything takes its origin," Hegel says that "the summit of man's attainment is that he as consciousness should make himself identical with the substance, in Religion by means of worship, offerings, and rigid acts of expiation, and in Philosophy through the instrumentality of pure thought."<sup>81</sup>

A few sections later, however, Hegel appears to make a case against his own position by confessing that the definite knowledge of Indian Philosophy had only been acquired recently! In general, while it was seen to be equivalent to religious ideas, in modern times "men have learned to recognize real philosophic writings."<sup>82</sup>

The primary basis of this *philosophical* understanding, according to Hegel, is formed by Henry Thomas Colebrooke's abstracts from

<sup>78</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 126.

<sup>79</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 127.

<sup>80</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 127.

<sup>81</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 127.

<sup>82</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 127.

two Indian philosophic works,<sup>83</sup> especially on the Sankhya-Yoga and Nyaya-Vaisheshika systems of thought. In fact, in comparison, Hegel is unimpressed by Frederick von Schlegel's view on the "wisdom" of India because he perceives it to be based on religious ideas alone, and "his work bore little fruit because he himself read no more than the index to the *Ramayana*!"<sup>84</sup>

Here, the reader is confronted with an astonishing peripatetic diversion. After expending considerable time on the demerits and inadequacies of Indian philosophical thought, Hegel dives into an unexpectedly elaborate and penetrating (even a dispassionately sympathetic) discussion of the four most dominant "heterodox" schools of classical Indian philosophy (namely those that do *not* take after the Vedas): Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika. In these sections, his references to "orthodox" schools such as Mimamsa and Vedanta are few, since he thinks of them as primarily designed to clarify Vedic deliverances, or to derive out of the original treatises an "ingeniously thought-out Psychology."<sup>85</sup> Of course, as evident from his copious allusions in *Bhagavad-Gita* and other writings, Hegel has already described those schools elsewhere.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> In referring to the two works, Hegel adds the footnote: "Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. I., Part I. London, 1824, pp. 19–43. (II. *On the Philosophy of the Hindus*, Part I, by Henry Thomas Colebrooke, read June 21, 1823)." Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 127.

<sup>84</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 129.

<sup>86</sup> It may be noted that the term "atheistical" is also used in place of "orthodox," synonymous with "tallying" with the Vedas. Importantly, while Hegel follows the classification laid out by Colebrooke, this categorization is not exclusive, or standard, in modern classifications—all six schools are usually viewed as orthodox in conventional philosophical taxonomy (it is the materialist school of Carvaka, along with Buddhism and Jainism, that are definitively treated as heterodox). Hegel does acknowledge though that while the Vedas contain "principally prayers addressed to the many representations of God, direction as to ceremonials, offerings, etc." (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 126–7), their importance is emphasized by the fact that they "even constitute the basis for the *atheistical* Indian philosophies" (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane,

In a lengthy but tersely worded treatment, Hegel offers the reader a report and interpretation of the classical Indian philosophical premises in a nutshell, the two chief ones being those of the Sankhya and the Nyaya.<sup>87</sup> The introduction to Sankhya begins with Hegel's remark that all Indian philosophical systems, whether atheistic or theistic, were united in their ultimate aim: to seek "the means whereby eternal happiness can be attained before, as well as after, death"<sup>88</sup>—a stage characterized by pure bliss and limitlessness:

The Vedas say, "What has to be known is the Soul; it must be distinguished from nature, and hence it will never come again." That means that it is exempt from metempsychosis and likewise from bodily form, so that it does not after death make its appearance in another body. This blessed condition therefore is, according to the Sankhya, a perfect and eternal release from every kind of ill.<sup>89</sup>

Also:

Now when the Indian thus internally collects himself, and retreats within his own thoughts, the moment of such pure concentration is called Brahma[n], the one and the clearly supersensuous state, which the understanding calls the highest possible existence. When this is so with me, then am I Brahma[n]. Such a retreat into Thought takes place in the Religion as well as in the Philosophy of the Indians, and they assert with reference to this state of bliss that it is what is highest of all.<sup>90</sup>

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vol. 1, p. 127; emphasis added). This may be the reason why all six schools have come to be seen as "orthodox." For references to Vedanta (which Hegel terms as "the reasoning part of the theology of the Vedas"), Vedic injunctions, and so on, see *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, pp. 34, 37, as elsewhere in the extended discussion.

<sup>87</sup> It would be of some interest to compare the lengths devoted to these discussions: Hegel appears to be most taken by the twin schools of Sankhya-Yoga (the lengthiest treatment, across pp. 128–41). Nyaya-Vaisheshika are dealt with more briefly (pp. 141–4), before he ends with a general conclusion concerning the fate and maladies of oriental philosophical thought (pp. 144–7).

<sup>88</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 129.

<sup>89</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 129.

<sup>90</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 129.

In sharing the same quest as that which the Vedas idealize, Hegel says that Sankhya may be different from religion only insofar as "it has a complete system of thought or logic," and that the abstraction it deals with cannot be reduced to what is *empty*, but "is raised up into the significance of a determinate thought." Yet it is decisive in many ways that Sankhya is defined by Hegel immediately afterward as a *science* (a word hardly ever used by him in a loose or careless way) "stated to subsist in the *correct knowledge* of the *principles* which may be outwardly perceptible or not of the material and of the immaterial world."<sup>91</sup>

Hegel (taking after Colebrooke's commentaries) begins with a summary of the Sankhya school that is believed to have been founded by Kapila.<sup>92</sup> In his review of the *Gita*, he says that it is "a system of philosophy ... in which great importance is attached to the precision of *counting* or *calculating* in the enumeration of its principles; Sankhya means number, enumeration." Further he says that Sankhya lays bare "quantities of ... objects, elements, categories," and "in it reasoning and philosophical reflection is intense."<sup>93</sup> This may be the reason why Hegel appears to spend the longest time unthreading this intricate system, revealing the architecture of categories and principles that constituted it, and pursuing the impetus that drove its overarching structure, that is, its Spirit—ideas toward which he would unfailingly lean.

In the *Gita*, Hegel in fact takes great pains to distinguish the *process* ("unfolding," or "path")—an element key to his own thought—that the systems of Sankhya and Yoga follow. He argues that, despite the view

<sup>91</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 130; emphasis added.

<sup>92</sup> The fragments of Ishvarakrishna's *Sankhyakarika*, however, are the earliest available writings, popular and cited by early scholars (along with the commentaries by Gaudapada and Vachaspati Mishra), and it is possible that the older *Sankhyasutra* by Kapila was lost in antiquity. It must also be noted that some scholars ascribe a political reason for the absence of discussion around Kapila's *sutras*: namely, the increasing influence of pluralistic, heterodox, and atheistic systems such as Jainism and Buddhism at the time when Ishvarakrishna composed his *karika* (fifth century CE). Insofar as Kapila is referred to by Ishvarakrishna himself, it could be supposed that his work must predate other writings, and this is admitted by both Colebrooke, and Hegel's account.

<sup>93</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, pp. 27–9.

that both systems are said to have the same goal, Sankhya did "well deserve" to be esteemed as true philosophy, and indeed it would be "utterly wrong to Indian philosophy" not to think so. The same could not necessarily be said about Yoga, which "does not go beyond the common, popular-religious views."<sup>94</sup>

On a general note, Sankhya is said to be "partly heterodox and partly orthodox," and Hegel mentions that Sankhya rejects the Vedas insofar as it condemns religious practices such as animal sacrifice advocated as a means to achieve the highest end of eternal happiness. Sankhya instead encourages the blissful condition of meditative self-concentration, "through *thought*, the *true science*," something that strongly tempts Hegel.<sup>95</sup> There may be some debate on this point. Traditional scholars opine that while Kapila's Sankhya may have begun with an allegiance to a Vedic Absolute (Brahman) in its classical form, it certainly seems to have abandoned this ideal—as seen in the later textual references—by positing a dualistic cosmos in its place: exhausted by an active Prakṛti ("nature"/world) and an intelligent Puruṣa ("soul"/Spirit) that together comprise all categories, principles, and elements that there may be, of objects and knowledge. The question of God (or a prime agent) is a controversial one. In fact, Sankhya does not seem to have a need for such a hypothesis. The discussion on Ishwara (God in a limited sense) is brief, but enough to show Hegel that Sankhya (via Kapila) "disowns" God (Ishwara), and ascribes all origin to the "great Principle, which is Intelligence" that proceeds out of nature, and hence can be seen as an effect of nature. The existence of effects (or creation itself), in turn, "depends on the soul, on consciousness, and not on Ishwara,"<sup>96</sup> an intriguing idea that we will revisit. The creation of the world may be induced, therefore, through the coming together of nature and soul alone, even as Hegel cites Colebrooke's distinction between the theistic and atheistic systems of the Sankhya, with Ishwara seen as the "ruler" of the world in the former, but not creator.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 129; emphasis added.

<sup>96</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 137–8.

<sup>97</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 132.

Hegel delves into a discussion of Sankhya in his review of the *Gita* with the same fervor as in the *History of Philosophy*. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the word “sankhya” is in fact referred to as *right knowledge*. In presenting the order of things, Sankhya proposes a means of *knowing*; hence the emphasis on knowledge or a “science” of principles that would correctly lead to the object(s) of knowledge. To illustrate Hegel’s engagement, a survey of his account of Sankhya may prove instructive. Sankhya thought can be classified under three parts, and Hegel provides a summary in his detailed study.

(a) *Method of Knowledge*: The three evidences that back knowledge, according to Sankhya, are perception, inference, and authoritative affirmation through tradition or revelation.

(b) *Objects of Knowledge* comprise 25 principles (24 + 1): Nature (Prakṛti)—the origin of everything—primordial materiality—and products of its evolution total to 24. First arises intelligence (*mahat*), followed by consciousness/personality/ego (*ahankara*). From consciousness issue, the inward sense organ (*manas*), five sensory organs (*jnanendriya*), five external/motor organs (*karmendriya*), five subtle atomic imperceptible particles (*tanmatra*) and five elements (*mahabhuta*). The Soul (Purusha) is the 25th principle.<sup>98</sup> These categories are intended to present a complete enumeration of principles, exhausting the cosmic structure, covering all that is to know; that is, they exhaust all possible knowledge.

Hegel remarks: “In this very unsystematic form we see only the *first beginnings of reflection*, which seem to be put together as a universal. But this arrangement is, to say nothing of being unsystematic, not even intelligent.”<sup>99</sup> However, it is important that this comment does not deter him from continuing his examination of this supposedly obscure thought. It leads him in fact to carefully study the peculiar relationship between nature and soul, creation, cause–effect, the role of God, forms of knowledge, and liberation—understandably, these themes would have affected Hegel deeply.

<sup>98</sup> Hegel chooses this word over “self,” the more common translation used elsewhere.

<sup>99</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 131; emphasis added.

Hegel cites Nature (or Prakrti), according to Sankhya, as being "universal, the material cause, eternal matter, undistinguished and undistinguishable, without parts, productive but without production, absolute substance."<sup>100</sup> It is the uncaused cause, first cause, first principle, ever active, the unintelligent and unconscious principle—even though bare intellect, personality and mind are its products. When compared to the Cartesian world, Sankhya creates an alternate metaphysical division between pure consciousness (Self or Soul) and matter (Nature), where unconscious matter includes not just body but also intellect, ego, and mind! Self or Soul (Purusha), in complete contrast, is the subject, knower, silent witness, neutral seer, pure consciousness, the conscious principle—it "not produced, and is not productive; it is individual ... sentient, eternal, immaterial and unchangeable."<sup>101</sup>

Nature is further expressed through the unity of three qualities (or *gunas*) held in equilibrium: *sattva* ("goodness"/existent/illuminating), *rajas* ("foulness"/motion), *tamas* ("darkness"/inertia), forming the divine characterizations of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara or Shiva respectively, in turn representing creation, preservation, and destruction—a trinity important to Hegel, evinced by his many allusions to it.<sup>102</sup> The significance of this characterization will be discussed again.

Sankhya argues that this placid equilibrium is disturbed when Nature comes into proximity with Self—this triggers Nature's evolution and results in the manifestation of the world (the feminine/masculine ascriptions are tacit here). It is when the Self, the enjoyer, "witnesses" Nature that the world comes into being and presents itself to consciousness. The collaboration of these two opposing principles is mutual: Self is given something to "see" and the active Nature gains the illumination of consciousness. Hegel elaborates:

The knowledge of the soul still remains the principal point. It is through the *consideration of nature* and through *abstraction from nature* that the unity of the soul with nature is brought about, just as the lame man and the blind are brought together for the purposes of transport and of guidance the one being the bearer and being directed (nature?), the other being borne and guiding (soul?). Through the union of Soul and

<sup>100</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 131.

<sup>101</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 131.

<sup>102</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 131.



Nature, the creation is effected, and this consists in the development of intelligence and of other principles.<sup>103</sup>

The universe (its creation of concrete actuality) consists of a Soul in a material body; and Sankhya recognizes several orders of beings. The higher beings (gods, demi-gods), seated in heaven, enjoy that which is good and virtuous. Lower orders including fauna, flora, and inorganic nature inhabit the underworld of darkness and delusion. Between is the "world of men, where untruth or passion reigns."<sup>104</sup> Such representations, reminiscent of Greek thought and cosmology, classical Christianity, and European mythology and literature, cannot be unfamiliar to Hegel.

For Sankhya, noble forms of intelligence comprise "virtue," "science and knowledge," "freedom from passion, which may have either an external and sensuous motive—the repugnance to disturbance—or be of an intellectual nature, and emanate from the conviction that *nature is a dream, a mere jugglery and sham,*" and "power."<sup>105</sup>

The relation of nature with Spirit is significant. It is of some interest that for Sankhya, Self as such is untouched by nature's evolution. In fact Nature (with 24 principles), although "quite inanimate, performs the office of preparing the soul for its freedom."<sup>106</sup> It is argued that evolution of Nature is primarily for two reasons: for the sake of enjoyment and contemplation of the Self and its liberation. To explain this, Sankhya resorts to a fascinating analogy: Nature is like a dancer showing herself to the Soul who is enchanted by the performance. Nature however then "retires when she has shown herself sufficiently; she does so because she has been seen, and the audience retires because it has seen."<sup>107</sup>

Remarkably, the pursuit of freedom (the ultimate end of right knowledge) is effected on the ascription of *falsity*, sought to be clarified by a methodical enumeration of principles and intelligence, understanding and the senses. These are classified as "determinations which impede [error, illusion, opinion, passion, hate, and grief], those

<sup>103</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 132; emphases added.

<sup>104</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol 1, p. 133.

<sup>105</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 136; emphasis added.

<sup>106</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 140.

<sup>107</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 140.

which incapacitate, those which satisfy, and those which perfect the intelligence."<sup>108</sup> Owing to ignorance or *confusion*, Purusha, the eternal pure consciousness identifies itself with the products of Prakrti, such as intellect, mind, and personality. This false identification results in bondage and suffering. Through the Self's *reflection*, Nature posits consciousness or intelligence, but is not itself conscious. Once the illusory self-same unity is laid bare through knowledge and study of principles, meditative practices, and control of senses (as also shown in Yoga-shastra), a raging dualistic world comes to the fore, and the Self learns to discriminate itself. This is the very moment when Spirit or Soul would have found self-knowledge or true clarity, "without personality and [self] consciousness,"<sup>109</sup> that he is not the other (that is, Nature, neither personality, nor intellect, nor mind). The "soul thus has ... nothing further to do with the body" and "nature is done with soul" (hence Hegel concludes that in Indian thought, the body / soul connection is superfluous). Such is the Self's "crowning" spiritual understanding that he is truly free and not bound by Nature, and this culminates in bliss, absolute liberation.<sup>110</sup>

After an exposition on the method and object of knowledge, Hegel arrives at Sankhya's third key foundational premise.

(c) The *Determinate Form of the Knowledge of Principles* is understood through Sankhya's understanding of the relation of *cause and effect*, pivotal to its worldview; namely, that the effect is pre-existent in cause, since "[O]ut of nothing there comes nothing."<sup>111</sup> For example, oil is already existent in the seeds of sesame before it is pressed out. That cause and effect are ultimately the same is illustrated by the fact that a piece of a dress is not different from the yarn from which it is woven, for the material is the same. This of course is designed to show Nature as the original final cause, as also reinforcing the eternity of the world. Hegel admits that this is "opposed to the belief in a creation of the world from nothing in our religious sense."<sup>112</sup> Moreover, he says that it is difficult to understand that there is no real distinction between cause and effect. According to Sankhya, effects proceed from cause, but ultimately go

<sup>108</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 133.

<sup>109</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 141.

<sup>110</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 141.

<sup>111</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 139.

<sup>112</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 139.

back into the universal cause. Just as a tortoise stretches out its limbs and then draws them back again, effects of Nature “return, step by step, to the first cause—that is, to what is highest and inseparable, which is Nature.”<sup>113</sup> Nature alone is the final source of the world of objects that is implicitly and *potentially* contained in it. As we have seen, however, it evolves for the sake of the Self. Yet, “true liberty is not to be expected as an act of nature, for it is the soul which has to bring forth that liberty through itself and through its thinking activity.”<sup>114</sup>

In the preceding sections, Hegel carefully studies an allied point: “It is at the same time an important consideration that the negation of the object which is contained in thought, is necessary.”<sup>115</sup> He continues:

The view is superficial and perverted which maintains the Easterns to have lived in unity with nature; the soul in its activity, mind, is indeed undoubtedly in relation with nature and in unity with the truth of nature. But this true unity essentially contains the moment of the negation of nature as it is in its immediacy; such an immediate unity is merely the life of animals, the life and perception of the senses. The idea which is present to the Indians is thus indeed the unity of nature and of soul, but the spiritual is only one with nature insofar as it is within itself, and at the same time manifests the natural as negative.<sup>116</sup>

It would seem that Hegel is confronted either with an incontrovertible “union” of Soul and Nature upon which actual evolution or creation of the universe rests, or their ultimate “separation”—the very premise of Soul’s freedom—when Nature is identified as illusory (“a dream, a mere jugglery and sham”), and inward subjectivity reigns once more (this notion is unclear in classical interpretations of Sankhya where reality is uncompromisingly dualistic, both self and Nature being equally real, neither illusory).<sup>117</sup> He further says:

<sup>113</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 139.

<sup>114</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 134.

<sup>115</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 132.

<sup>116</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 132.

<sup>117</sup> Illusion is a complex idea in Indian thought: it does not imply pure falsity or non-existence. Image and reflection describe it to an extent, and it is often ascribed with a background and foreground. Various compared to perceptual examples, such as snake/rope, crystal/flower, many philosophical schools resort to it in describing their theoretical moorings. Cf. classic theory

The soul's desire and end is for satisfaction and freedom, and with this view it is endowed with a subtle environment, in which all the above-mentioned principles are contained, but only in their elementary development. Something of our ideal, or of the implicit is present in this idea; it is like the blossom which is ideally in the bud, and yet is not actual and real.<sup>118</sup>

During the exposition of Sankhya, Hegel refers to what may be described as an evil double or twin—the *triadic dialectic*—more than once, and he is seen eager to distinguish his own version. We have seen that this is a recurring exercise that Hegel undertakes elsewhere as well.

It is noteworthy that in the observing consciousness of the Indians it struck them that what is true and in and for itself contains three determinations, and the Notion of the Idea is perfected in three moments. This sublime consciousness of the trinity, which we find again in Plato and others, then went astray in the region of thinking contemplation, and retains its place only in Religion, and there but as a Beyond. Then the understanding penetrated through it, declaring it to be senseless; and it was Kant who broke open the road once more to its comprehension. The reality and totality of the Notion of everything, considered in its substance, is absorbed by the triad of determinations; and it has become the business of our times to bring this to consciousness.<sup>119</sup>

Hegel says that Sankhya and other Indian systems of philosophy place great significance on three qualities (*guna*) of the "absolute Idea, which are represented as substances and as modifications of nature,"<sup>120</sup> and

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of superimposition (*adhyasa*) in Vedantic thought. Based on such assumptions, most schools account for comprehensive theories of error. In Sankhya it is especially difficult to understand this because Nature is not really false itself; the Soul only falsely associates with it owing to a confused misattribution of their essential characteristics. Hence, Nature is seen to "retire" when Soul has observed or enjoyed it, and ultimately realized that it is the "other," or different from what it thought was the same, i.e., in the ultimate attainment of "discriminatory" knowledge of separation (*viveka*).

<sup>118</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 132.

<sup>119</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 134–5.

<sup>120</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 134.

conceived of as its essential being. Nature, here, is understood as an "admixture"<sup>121</sup> of the three qualities: goodness, passion, and darkness. The *first* and highest is the Good (*sattva*), exalted and illuminating, related to joy, felicity, and piety, and prevails in fire; it is the origin of virtue and expressed through Brahma in mythology. In abstract form, it represents the universal and affirmative. The *second* and mediate quality is deceit or passion (*rajas*), blind, impure, harmful, hateful, active, vehement, and restless, allied to evil and misfortune, prevalent in the air, and the cause of vice; this finds expression in Vishnu. The *third* quality is darkness (*tamas*); it is inert and obstructive, connected to care, dullness, and disappointment, predominating in earth and water, tends downwards, is the origin of stupidity; and expressed as Shiva, the god of change or destruction. The first quality is thus the *unity with itself*; the second the manifestation or the *principle of difference*, desire, disunion, as wickedness; the third, however, is *mere negation*.<sup>122</sup>

Hegel argues, however, that these qualities are "understood in a very superficial way,"<sup>123</sup> and such recognition "proceeded from *sensuous observation* merely."<sup>124</sup> To illustrate this "superficial" connection, Hegel says, "each thing has all three within itself, like three streams which flow together; it also works by means of modifications, just as water which is soaked in through the roots of plants and led up into the fruit, obtains a special flavour."<sup>125</sup>

It may be interesting to recall that in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel explains the triadic dialectic through the example of a plant, its bud, blossom, and fruit. Now Hegel compares the triadic determination available in Indian thought with his own as follows:

[T]he important distinction is that the third principle is *not the return to the first* which Mind and Idea demand, and which is effected by the *removal of the negation in order to effect a reconciliation with itself and to go back within itself*. With the Indians the third is still change and negation."<sup>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 140.

<sup>122</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 135.

<sup>123</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 139.

<sup>124</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 135.

<sup>125</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 140.

<sup>126</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 135–6; emphases added.

Thus Hegel finds the dialectic lacking insofar as it prevents true sublation (*aufheben*) that combines the notion of canceling *and* preservation, where the first and second moments are carried forward into a synthetic reconciliation manifest in the third moment. Yet, the resemblance between the two forms of dialectic is uncanny, and Hegel's sustained engagement with it bears testimony to this.

After a discussion of Sankhya-Yoga, Hegel proceeds to examine another primary system of Indian philosophical thought—Nyaya-Vaisheshika. The importance he attaches to it is clear in the statement: "Nyaya is the most developed; it more particularly gives the rules for reasoning, and may be compared to the Logic of Aristotle."<sup>127</sup> Nyaya (said to have been founded by Gautama) literally means "reasoning" or a "specially perfect dialectic" and comprises the study of "enunciation, definition and investigation," while Vaisheshika (founded by Kanada) refers to a "particular" atomist system of the physics of sensuous objects.<sup>128</sup>

First, Hegel speaks of the epistemological foundations of Nyaya or means of knowledge. The evidence brought forth as proof of knowledge covers perception, inference (namely, inference from result to cause, from cause to effect, and one derived from analogy), comparison, and trustworthy authority, including both tradition and revelation.

Second, the ontological world *to be known* (object of knowledge) is built upon Vaisheshika's postulation of elemental categories. These are composed of soul, body, organs of sensation (matter constructed out of the five elements)<sup>129</sup> and objects of sense, namely substance, quality, action, association of qualities, distinction, aggregation (and negation).

Third, formal reasoning and perfect syllogism consist of five propositions: (1) the proposition; (2) the reason; (3) the instance;

<sup>127</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 128.

<sup>128</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 141.

<sup>129</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 143.

Hegel makes the startling discovery here that the organ of seeing according to Vaisheshika is not the pupil of the eye, but a ray of light that proceeds from the eye to the object. He says: "We find something similar to what is here said about sight in Plato's *Timaeus* (pp. 45, 46, Steph.; pp. 50, 53, Bekk.); there are interesting remarks upon the phosphorus of the eyes in a paper by Schultz, contained in Goethe's *Morphology*."

(4) the application; (5) the conclusion. To take the ubiquitous example employed by Nyaya: (1) This hill is burning; (2) because it smokes; (3) what smokes is burning, like a kitchen fire; (4) accordingly the hill smokes; (5) therefore it is on fire.

Hegel is prompt in distinguishing this vis-à-vis the syllogistic form familiar to his mind, and he says: "We should, on the contrary, begin with the general."<sup>130</sup> However, the innocuous syllogistic similarity—albeit distant—coupled with considerations noted in the preceding discussions appear to have been sufficient to lead Hegel towards presenting an unambiguous clarification that Indian thought is different from his own. This would serve as a defense of his own thought, and forms the concluding section of Oriental Philosophy in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

Hegel's note on Nyaya begins with a delineation of its shared aim with other "psychological" schools: "happiness, final excellence, and freedom from evil as the reward of a perfect knowledge of the principles," namely "Truth, meaning the conviction of the eternal existence of the soul as separable from body."<sup>131</sup> Soul or Spirit is independent, and hence is itself the object that is to be known and proved. This would be problematic to Hegel in principle, thus his conclusion frankly grapples with this and an array of perplexing dialectical impetuses found in Indian thought. A somewhat interlaced and overlapping discussion leaves us with the following conclusions:

- (a) *Negation* of the object contained in thought is necessary for Hegel. This cannot be "mere negation" or superficial.
- (b) *Subjectivity or Objectivity*: In Indian thought, the Spirit or soul aims to raise itself up into liberty, "or thought, which constitutes itself for itself": this primary end for Hegel is abstract "intellectual substantiality," where all subjectivity of "I" is lost. At the same time, he says there is no objective truth, duty, or right, and thus empty subjective vanity or subjective soul is the only thing left.<sup>132</sup> How is this gap to be reconciled?

<sup>130</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>131</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 142.

<sup>132</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 144–5.

- (c) *Unity/Separation of nature and soul. Negation of nature:* for Sankhya, the soul ultimately recognizes itself to be *not-nature*. But according to Hegel, this negation is only found in its immediacy. Hence, we see its primal form, not its mature manifestation.
- (d) *Consideration of and abstraction from nature.* We have seen in some detail that Sankhya attributes this to the Spirit, and to that extent it would appear to comfortably cohere in the Hegelian world. However, Hegel thinks otherwise. He says that this "empty" intellectual substantiality does not reflect the unity of mind and nature, but the very opposite. In this instance, "to mind, the consideration of nature is only the vehicle of thought for its liberation," hence for Hegel, not a sincere engagement.<sup>133</sup>
- (e) The end of Indian thought is *freedom*, but what is described is only elementary, unmediated, and abstract. For Hegel, the intellectual substantiality arrived at through Indian thought is in fact the opposite of "reflection, understanding, and the subjective individuality of the European," where the judgment that "I will, know, believe, think" in accordance with "my own free will" is paramount.<sup>134</sup> To "philosophize is the idealism of making thought, in its own right, the principle of truth," and therefore Hegel argues that intellectual substantiality ought only be the beginning and not the end.<sup>135</sup>

Hegel concedes that the point of interest is to reach intellectual substantiality and "drown" subjective vanity.<sup>136</sup> But according to him the defect in such a view is that because intellectual substantiality—while represented as end and aim for the subject—is yet only quite *abstractly objective* and lacking in the "essential form of objectivity," it expresses what is empty and without determination, wherein everything vanishes. The higher and "real ground of the inwardly self-forming and determining objectivity," however, consists in the eternal form within itself, and this Hegel says, "men call Thought."<sup>137</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, pp. 144–5.

<sup>134</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>135</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>136</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>137</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 145.



In sum, he contends that (a) Thought, as subjective, should be mine, because *I think*; (b) it is universality that *comprehends* intellectual substantiality; and (c) it must be characterized by the principle of *particular* determination. In combining universality or substantiality, objectivity and particular content, Hegel imputes to thought its basis in the real freedom of the subject. It is "where the universal has immediate existence and actual presence; it is not only an end or condition to be arrived at, but the absolute character is objective,"<sup>138</sup> a principle Hegel indicates is demonstrated in the Greek world—this would be the universal, objective, particular truth of the free human Spirit that Hegel seeks.

For him, then, Indian philosophy's function is what could be termed as preparatory and thus *outside* history. It is not proper philosophy for the reasons he arduously explores; nevertheless Hegel is convinced that it must be accounted for in some way—unformed and primitive "wisdom" which may have been *presupposed*, and thereby not part of the manifest history of philosophy.

Does this analysis smack exclusively of racial prejudice and colonial bias? Not necessarily. The heart of Hegel's engagement with Indian art, religion, and philosophy is real and vibrant, both exposing and touching at the heart of Hegel's own thought. The missionary zeal, colonialist context, and Eurocentric trappings are a distraction, partly just unconsciously the product of his times, and partly consciously, deployments by Hegel designed to annoy and rebuke his own contemporaries. We deduce that his severest criticisms arise due to frustrations on account of the twining similarities of his own conception of philosophy and the Indian Absolute, and his compelling need to firmly separate the two. At any rate, these writings exhibit a sustained consideration of Indian art, religion, and philosophy in a manner that goes well beyond what is to be found in contemporary, allegedly non-Eurocentric academic philosophy.

<sup>138</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Haldane, vol. 1, p. 146.

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## Fragments

### Oriental Spirit, Logic, and Right

*I am what is missing.*

—From the poem “Keeping Things Whole” by Mark Strand, 1979

### Oriental Spirit

It is commonplace within the secondary literature on Hegel's India writings to find mention of Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808) and Georg Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie* (1810–12) as the primary targets of Hegel's obsession, as it were, with putting India in its place. It is often mistakenly assumed that “Hegel took up the topic of the Orient in works composed during his time as a university professor, first at Jena (1801–6), then at Heidelberg (1816–17), and finally at Berlin (1818–30).”<sup>1</sup> In fact, Hegel's first foray into the oriental world occurred much earlier, as apparent through a fragment entitled “Oriental Spirit,” dated somewhere between 1795 and 1798, drafted during his time in Bern or, more likely, Frankfurt.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crawford, “Hegel and the Orient.”

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, “Geist der Orientalen,” in *Frühe Schriften, Werke* 1, pp. 428–32.

The absence of consideration of this early writing in Anglophone scholarship treating of Hegel's India works probably arises from the fact that the fragment has never appeared in English before. This is unfortunate because, although this writing does not address India specifically, it does clearly link one central preoccupation of Hegel's extended critique of India in *The Philosophy of World History*—that is, the static nature of oriental spirit—back to a period earlier than the appearance of Indological writings by German Romantics.

That the fragment has yet to appear in English makes a great deal of sense, however, when one considers what a ridiculous piece of work it is: chauvinistic, with strong racist and anti-Semitic overtones, and scarcely a single redeeming insight. A good many of its obtusely worded passages are unintelligible to boot. Nevertheless, we have decided to translate the fragment with the aim to be comprehensive in presenting Hegel's India. For the same reason, we also include within this section passages from his *Science of Logic* and *Philosophy of Right*. Although the ideas, and indeed at times precisely the same language, appear elsewhere, these fragments are incorporated such that *all* of Hegel's India writings are made available through this volume. Interestingly, what Hegel writes in the *Logic* and in *Right* recapitulate rather precisely two of his chronic censures of India: on the one hand, in the *Logic*, that the notion of the Absolute is insufficiently *mediated*; and on the other, in *Right*, the concrete problem of *freedom*.

### The Logic of Indian Thought

In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel makes a brief but vital, highly critical note (under the section entitled "Measure") claiming that the relationship between substance (being, the one, infinite, essence) and change (becoming, determinateness, finite, accidental, perishable, non-essential) is not fully expressed in pantheistic systems. For him, while the Hindu conception of Trimurti reflects this spirit, it does so inadequately.

He says that Brahma, the One of abstract thought, passes through the form of Vishnu (or as Krishna) to the third form, Shiva. The determination of this third is Mode, change, arising and passing away. However, the principle of Mode and change in pantheistic systems does not bring concrete determination; it is ultimately reduced to nullity, a comparison he makes with Spinoza's system.

Hegel argues once more:

The determination of the Indian third principle is that it is the dispersal of the substantial unity into its opposite, *not its turning back* to itself—a spiritual void rather, not spirit. In the true trinity, there is not only unity but unification; the syllogism is brought to a unity which is *full of content* and *actual*, a unity which in its totally concrete determination is *spirit*.<sup>3</sup>

Shiva is not truly distinct from Brahma; it is Brahma itself. So, the difference and determinateness vanish again, but in vanishing neither is preserved nor transcended in the dialectical universe mediated by sublation. It is said that unity is not led back to concrete unity, nor dissension to reconciliation. As a result, Hegel declares that in Indian thought, all content is abandoned into the void, into a unity merely formal and without content.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, he would maintain that it ought to be “needless to apply a formal scheme to the concrete content in an external fashion ... because the form is the *indwelling* process of the concrete content itself.”<sup>5</sup>

### Right: Spirit Wandering in the World of Dreams

The *Philosophy of Right* traces objective Spirit in its journey, which is commensurate with the evolution of the principle of subjectivity and self-conscious freedom through successive stages. The oriental empire, constituting the absolute starting point of its history, however, derived its force only out of a theocratic or autocratic government: its ruler was quite often a high priest, a monarch, or God, its constitution and

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. di Giovanni, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> In the chapter on “Being,” Hegel refers to an analogy:

With this totally abstract purity of continuity, that is, with this indeterminateness and emptiness of representation, it is indifferent whether one names this abstraction ‘space’ or ‘pure intuition’ or ‘pure thought.’ It is altogether the same as what an Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, looking only at the tip of his nose, externally motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, representation, phantasy, desire, and so on, he inwardly says only *Om, Om, Om*, or else says nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, taken as consciousness, is just this—*being*. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. di Giovanni, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. Baillie, p. 55; emphasis added.

legislation synonymous with its religion, or capricious maxims, and its civic and legal regulations were conflated with religious and moral commands. In this grand totality, the individual personality seems to sink without rights; external nature is directly or indirectly divine, restless, and undetermined. Besotted with accidents of personal power and arbitrary rule, caste divisions became fixed as the laws of nature. This indicates, for Hegel, that the oriental empire was yet to develop its rational objectivity of self-conscious substantiality, freedom, as also the condition of stable, organized law. Again, this presentation reduces the plurality of Indian history, religions, regimes, and politics to those captured in the mainstream of Brahminic Hinduism, which is a partial and misleading presentation of India; however, insofar as it touches upon the heart of Brahminism, Hegel's insights echo those of numerous later scholars and activists. With this we reach the end of a survey of these fragments.

## Conclusion

*Reminds me of the one about the condemned man. Climbing the scaffold stairs, he trips, and says, "It figures ..."*

—From the film *Breathless*, 1960

To recall Walter Kaufmann's account,

In an aphorism of the Berlin period, Hegel said: "a great man condemns men to explicate him" (Ros. 555). For a commentator this is an appropriate motto, but Hegel was almost certainly not thinking of himself, and the motto is as apt for his preface as it is for my commentary: we are all condemned, as Hegel sees it, to try to comprehend what man has thought up to our time and to relive, in condensed form, the experiences of the world spirit.<sup>1</sup>

In the introduction to his translation of Hegel's essay on Gita, Herbert Herring refers to Section 573 of the *Encyclopedia* as Hegel's "not very enlightening discourse on Indian thought."<sup>2</sup> Though recognizing that

<sup>1</sup> Kaufmann, "The Preface to the Phenomenology," in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Herring, "Introduction," in Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. xix.

Hegel's review is important enough to translate into English, Herring is critical of Hegel for his tone and tenor. He writes that Hegel's

[n]arrations are presented in a rather disrespectful language, so that one could get the impression that this was done to ridicule the Indian world-view, to mark it as atavistic, superstitious, childish, and that in so doing Hegel wanted to drive home his point that ... ancient Indian "philosophy" was still in a crude, unrefined, unreflected stage, *in statu nascendi*, far from having reached that maturity of the autonomous individual's self-conscious awareness of creative freedom.<sup>3</sup>

With specific reference to Hegel's "rather disrespectful language," Herring's remarks are quite true. But to suggest, therefore, that his reflections are "not very enlightening" is a touch hasty. For Hegel's comments on India are extremely enlightening at least in respect to the nature, requirements, and self-understood standing of his own system.

The true form in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of it. To contribute to this end, that philosophy might come closer to the form of science—the goal being that it might be able to relinquish the name of love of knowledge and be actual knowledge—that is what I have resolved to try.<sup>4</sup>

It is not simply the indefensible bias of Hegel that led to his dismissive conclusions about the profundity of Indian thought. Indeed, after a careful study of all of Hegel's India writings vis-à-vis his own system of philosophy, the reader may begin to sense that it might be precisely the other way round. Hegel's conclusions—after a deep and wide-ranging enquiry, as well as a great deal of writing—regarding the beauty of Indian art, the sublimity of Indian religion, and the complexity and significance of Indian philosophy may be a sizeable part of what led to this prejudice.

As we draw to a close, Ignatius Viyagappa's observations from his detailed scholarly study of Hegel's India writings are worth citing:

<sup>3</sup> Herring, "Introduction," in Hegel, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata*, p. xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel, "Preface to Phenomenology," in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, ed. Kaufmann, p. 12.

Even a casual and cursory reading through the various texts in the various works on India is enough to puzzle a reader, and doubt arises whether Hegel was sometimes out of his mind. Ideas and narrations are repeated in various works. At times, statements found in one work are found almost contradicted in other works. Sometimes he is highly appreciative and at other times, severely critical of India.... Not only from book to book, but also within one and the same book do we read variant and even mutually discrepant texts.<sup>5</sup>

We hope it has become at least partly clear why many of these self-contradictions arise in Hegel's writings. On the one hand, Hegel had indeed inherited (and perpetuated) so many of the vices of his era: racism, orientalism, chauvinism, religious bias, pride of cultural superiority, anti-Semitism—the full gamut. On the other hand, his philosophical bent enjoined repeated engagement with the newly discovered treasures of Indian philosophy, and his irrepressible intellectual hunger and curiosity engendered his exhaustive investigations into Indian mythology, history, art, and religion. On one side, posturing against his intellectual rivals had him treat Indian thought with acerbic contempt, riding roughshod over the subtle distinctions which, during cooler and more contemplative moments, he himself took great pains to tease out, articulate, and explore. And yet that which was most impressive to Hegel about Indian philosophy also posed a grave threat to him. At times it might have struck him that all his thankless, laborious cultivation and development of a cutting-edge, end-all philosophy, to which indeed he had devoted his entire life, culminated in no more than those precious insights already enjoyed by distant Indian philosophers centuries before. As much as he was enchanted by them, Hegel went to inordinate lengths to painstakingly distinguish the Hindu Trimurti (triune godhead) and Brahman (the Absolute) from the method and form of his own philosophy of the emergence of the Absolute. Whatever objective evidence presented itself to the contrary, the logical framework of his philosophical system demanded, for its tenuous success, that Indian thought be merely emergent, nascent, childlike—representative of the *morning* Spirit.

As ludicrous as many of Hegel's disparaging and contemptuous pronouncements appear to us nearly two centuries on, we wonder

<sup>5</sup> Viyagappa, G. W. F. *Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 2–3.



how absurd our own self-righteous hypocrisy might appear to Hegel: for under our watch, at even the best universities in the Anglophone world, students are graduated with degrees in philosophy without ever having heard the names or basic concepts of major philosophers or far-reaching philosophical systems that arose in traditions ostensibly beyond the horizon of their own. We say "ostensibly" because, as Hegel knew too well, it is actually free to us to determine where that horizon lies, and why. Professional contemporary philosophers in the so-called Western world have preponderantly drawn the boundary, physically and metaphysically, in a manner even more retrograde, rigid, and conservative than Hegel's own.

The following pages from Hegel's works stand witness to a rare and inspiring plunge of faith.

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## TEXTS

*Note:* The following chapters have been extracted from multiple sources which had varying archaic spellings for words such as “Brahman”, “Shakuntala”, and “Narmada”. The authors have used the contemporary versions of such spellings consistently throughout this section for better readability.

# On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name *Bhagavad-Gita* by Wilhelm von Humboldt\*

## First Article

Regarding the topic with which the highly esteemed author wanted to bestow the public, one cannot but remark that the fame of *Indian wisdom* belongs to the most ancient traditions in history. Where one discusses the sources of *philosophy*, one not only points to the orient in general but especially to India; the high regard of this ground of wisdom was very early part of certain legendary reports, as that of Pythagoras' visit there, etc., and at all times there were talks and reports about Indian religion and philosophy. But only recently the access to the sources has been opened up to us, and with every progress in this field of knowledge all former information reveals itself partly as

\* *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known by the Name Bhagavad Gita* by Wilhelm Von Humboldt, ed. and trans. Herbert Herring (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1995), pp. 1-151. Reproduced with permission from Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi.

insignificant, partly as oblique and useless. As ancient a world India is according to the general knowledge Europeans have of this country, it is yet for us an only very recently discovered new world with regard to its literature, its sciences, and arts. The first joy at the discovery of these treasures did not let us accept them in a composed and moderate way. *William Jones*, to whom in particular we owe the uncovering of these treasures, and others after him, have seen the value of these discoveries especially in that they took them to be partly the direct sources, partly new testimonies of the ancient world historic traditions, related to Asia, as also for more Western legends and mythologies. But becoming acquainted with the originals themselves—also the disclosure of the far reaching deceit which Captain Wilford accomplished with the help of obliging Brahmins,<sup>1</sup> namely to trace Mosaic stories and European ideas, knowledge, and information about Asian history, etc. in Indian literature—has led to the habit to mainly stick to the originals and to the study of the peculiarity of the Indian world-view and ideas.

It is obvious that our knowledge is promoted by taking such a turn only. In such a way von Humboldt has dealt with the famous episode of the Mahabharata and grossly enriched our insight into the Indian

<sup>1</sup> The pandit whom Wilford was careless enough to specially instruct to investigate into stories which he told him from Mosaic, Greek and other sources, found obligingly everything the Captain wanted in the works he had sent to him at great expense. When he began to discover the falsity of the extracts, the pandit in order to extricate himself from the scrape forged the manuscripts in a most shameless way, put himself into the most vehement paroxysm of rage, called down upon himself and his children heavenly revenge with the most horrible, terrible curses, if the extracts were not authentic. He brought on ten Brahmins who were not only prepared to defend him but willing to testify on oath, upon everything holiest in their religion, the correctness of the extracts. "After having strictly admonished them for this prostitution of their priesthood, I did not permit them to continue" (Wilford's own report in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. VIII, p. 251). Works which are the fruits of assiduous, most laudable efforts as, for instance, de Polier's *Mythology of the Hindus* (published only in 1809), we would now have scruples to use as it is based upon dictations and verbal information by Brahmins, the more so as we know through Colebrooke what sorts of forgery and arbitrary alterations and additions even works on astronomy have been and are still being exposed to which, after all, because of their antiquity and the reputation of their authors are kept in high esteem.



conception of the highest spiritual interests. Real information can only derive from what has been achieved in the essay under consideration: the rare combination of a profound knowledge of the original language, intimate acquaintance with the philosophy and the wise reservation not to transcend the strict meaning of the original, to see nothing more than what is precisely expressed in it. The aforesaid implies our full agreement to the admonition of the author, made by him in a prefatory notice, that there is "hardly" ("we may be permitted to change this moderate 'hardly' into a bold 'not at all'") "another means to elucidate the many obscurities in Indian mythology and philosophy than to excerpt each of the works which may be considered the main sources and to deal with them one by one before comparing them with others. Such an undertaking alone would provide the basis for a comparison of all Indian philosophical and mythological systems without the risk of confusion." Once one has tried to inform oneself about Indian religion, cosmogony, theogony, mythology, etc., also with the help of more modern authors who have used sources, one will soon learn that when believing to have acquired a certain knowledge from such an author and when proceeding to another, there one would meet with completely different names, concepts, narratives, etc. The thus created distrust must give way to the view that all these were but particular presentations and that one would have obtained nothing less than a knowledge of the *general* Indian world-view. In plenty of German publications dealing explicitly or occasionally with Indian religion and philosophy, and also in the numerous histories of philosophy where this is also dealt with, one finds that a particular aspect, derived from a certain author, is presented as Indian religion and philosophy *in general*.

But the poetic work under consideration seems to be specially suitable to grant us a distinct idea of the most general and most sublime in Indian religion. As an episode it serves in particular a doctrinal purpose and is thus freer of the wild, enormous fantastic compositions, dominant in Indian narrative poetry, depicting events and deeds of heroes and gods, of the origin of the world, etc. Yet even in this poem it is necessary to cope with many things and to abstract much in order to emphasize what is interesting. The great Governor General of India Warren Hastings, whom above all we owe the first acquaintance with the whole poem through his encouragement, for which its first translator, Wilkins, expresses his gratitude to him, says in the Foreword to this

translation that in order to assess the merit of such a production one must do away with all rules derived from ancient or modern European literature, with all relations to such sentiments or morals which are the characteristic principles in our thinking and acting, and also with all references to our revealed religious doctrines and moral duties. And furthermore he adds that every reader should have anticipated and accepted such characteristics as *obscurity, absurdity, barbarian customs and a depraved morality*. Where the opposite appears, he may consider it a sheer advantage and regard its being contrary to expectation a merit. Without the claim to such forbearance he could hardly have dared recommend the publication of this poem. Von Humboldt, through his laborious and diligent compilation of the main ideas that are contained in the eighteen hymns of the work without a distinct order, has eased or spared us the labor of such abstractions; and such an extract also spares us especially from the exhaustions caused by the tedious repetitions of Indian poetry.

This poem, *a discussion with Krishna* (*Bhagavad* is, as W. Hastings enlightens the uninformed reader, and for which I too am grateful to him, one of the names of Krishna), is famous in India for expounding the basic essentials of Indian religion. A. W. V. Schlegel calls it in the Foreword to his edition *a famous philosophical poem, praised in the whole of India, whose wisdom and sanctity can hardly be surpassed by any other*. Wilkins testifies the same in the Preface to his translation; he says that the Brahmins consider it as containing all great mysteries of their religion. This aspect marks the tendency of the following observations. The essay under consideration which is the inducement of these observations, by presenting us the basic teachings in a firm compilation, leads us automatically to such a consideration and makes it easy in permitting us to follow simply its guidance.

I first give the *situation* of the poem, for this is self-explanatory enough. The hero Arjuna—at war with his relatives, at the head of his army, with god Krishna as his charioteer, the enemy's army lined up in front of him and prepared for the battle, and while the battle-music of the horns, conches, trumpets, drums etc. echoes horribly from heaven to earth and arrows fly already—is overcome with timid scruples, drops bow and arrows and asks Krishna's advice; the thus caused dialogue presents a complete philosophical system of eighteen hymns, called lessons by the two translators and which are known as *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Such a situation is of course contrary to all conceptions we Europeans have of war and of the moment when two great armies are confronting each other, ready to fight, and it is also contrary to all our demands of a poetic composition and to our habits to locate the meditation and presentation of an entire philosophical system in our study or elsewhere, yet certainly not in the mouth of the general and his charioteer at such a decisive hour. This strange form of the introduction makes us prepared for the fact that also with regard to the essence, the religion and morality, we are to expect something completely other than our familiar ideas.

We can generally subsume the great interests of our intellect under the two aspects of the *theoretical* and the *practical* of which the former refers to *knowledge*, the latter to *action*. According to these two definitions the philosophical mind of the author [W. v. Humboldt] comprehends the teachings of the work. Once the dialogue has started, the *practical* interest is first dealt with. Here as the principle we have the necessity to *give up all claims* to the *fruits* of actions, to all *results*. Never, says Krishna, is an action's value estimated by its fruits. This *tranquility* marks, as the highly esteemed author correctly remarks, "without doubt philosophically a mental constitution coming close to the sublime." We can recognize in this the moral obligation to do good for the sake of the good only and duty only for duty's sake. But that the demand of such indifference towards the result may at the same time (in itself) produce a great poetic effect, can well be doubted if one is inclined to demand of poetic characters more a concrete individuality and the direction of their whole intensity towards the realization of their goals, and to see great poetic vivacity and hence great poetic effect only in the harmony of their will-power with their interests.

Apart from this great moral intention there arises for the practical interest a second necessity, namely to know what aim action is to strive after, what duties it must fulfill or must respect in the case of interest's being determined by arbitrariness or circumstances. I take the liberty to incidentally draw the attention to this aspect because that Indian principle, like that of modern morals, does as such not yet lead to anything, and from itself there cannot result any moral duties. One can expect to find such explanations first of all in the motivation of the whole poem, and hence the investigation should initially be restricted to this; and then the relationship of duty and action in general to the

Yoga-teaching must be considered. That Arjuna's war which he has waged against his relatives is a just one, we must take for granted; in the *Bhagavad-Gita* the principle of that right is not particularly commented on. The doubt, however, arising in Arjuna the very moment when the battle is set to start is due to the peculiar fact that it is his and his army's kinsmen he is expected to fight and of whom he gives a detailed account: teachers, fathers, sons, as well as grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, nephews, brothers-in-law and consanguineous ones of the male lineage. Whether this doubt involves a *moral* quality, as it seems to do at first, must be dependent on, the nature of that value which in the Indian Arjuna's mentality is attached to family-ties. To the moral understanding of the European the sense of this tie is the moral in itself so that the love for one's family is as such the completion, and morality consists only in the fact that all sentiments connected with this tie, such as respect, obedience, friendship, etc. as well as actions and duties related to family-relationship, have that love as their foundation and as a self-sufficient starting point. We see, however, that it is not this moral sentiment which in the hero causes the reluctance to lead his relatives to the slaughter. We would commit crimes, he says, if we would kill those robbers (Wilkins: tyrants); not in the sense that killing them as relatives (the teachers always included) would be in itself the crime, but the crime would be a *consequence*, namely that through extinction of the generations the *sacra gentilitia*, the duty-bound and religious performances of a family would be destroyed. When this happens, lack of godliness affects *the whole tribe* (this is to us somewhat incoherent as a few words earlier the extinction of the tribe was supposed). In that way the *noble* women-folk—of the tribe the men only can first of all be killed, for they alone are engaged in the battle—will be defiled, from which results varna-sankara, the mixture of castes (*the spurious brood*). Yet the vanishing of caste distinctions leads those who are guilty of the extinction of the tribes and the tribe itself into eternal ruin (Schlegel: *infernis* mancipant, Wilkins: provideth *Hell* for those, etc.); for the *ancestors* drop down from the heavens because in future they will be devoid of *cakes* and *water*, no more receiving these oblations, for their descendants have not preserved the purity of the tribe. Descendants, it is admitted, the ancestors can still have and hence of these they could also receive oblations, but these oblations would be unwholesome for them since they had been offered by a spurious brood, and thus they

will not be offered. The cakes are, as Wilkins writes, offered by direction of the Vedas up to the third generation on every new-moon day, the water-libation, however, daily.<sup>2</sup> If the dead do not receive such offerings then they are condemned to the fate of being reborn as impure beasts.

What follows hereof regarding the part of a practical principle is, as we see, that though the sentiment of the family-tie appears as basis, its value is, however, not understood in the sense of love for the family and hence not as moral obligation. Animals too have the feeling of this tie; in man it becomes at once mental but moral only in so far as it is retained in its purity or rather developed in its purity as love and when, as mentioned above, this love is preserved as basis. Here, however, great importance is attached to the conversion of this tie into a superstitious context, into an immoral belief in the dependence of the soul's fate after death on the cake and water-libations of the relatives, that is to say of those who have remained true to the caste-distinction.

Thus we should not be deceived by the first good impression, when in the explanation which Arjuna gives of his scruples we at once meet with sentences wherein religion is allotted a very eminent place. The sentence already quoted above, in Schlegel's translation: *Religion being eliminated, the dereliction of duty spreads over the whole race*, sounds generally very well for our European understanding. After the remarks we have made, however, *religion* means the offering of cakes and water-libation, and *dereliction of duty* means partly the omission of such ceremonies, partly marriage into lower castes—a meaning for which we have neither religious nor moral respect. In the *Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 2, von Humboldt interprets *dereliction of duty* closer towards the meaning of annihilated right. Here the poet has not yet overcome the common Indian superstition in favor of a moral, truly religious or philosophical definition.

<sup>2</sup> More details of these religious rites for the dead can be found in Gans' *The Development of Right of Succession in World History* where the nature of Indian matrimony and family life in general is described. Paternity aims at maintaining children as instruments for fulfilling the duty of sacrifices for the ancestors. The extravagant ways to have children for that purpose are mentioned on p. 78. It is also mentioned that for want of other relatives the teachers, above mentioned among the kinsfolk, will be the heirs.

Let us now consider what Krishna replies to the scruples of Arjuna. First of all this reluctance to fight he calls weakness, an unbecoming faint-heartedness, and that he should pull himself together. In Wilkins' translation we have a more expressive reminder of the *duty* (as he explains: of the soldier in relation to the common moral duties). Though the moral collision is not stressed more distinctly by the term used, it is nevertheless there, and for a solution Krishna's mere scolding is not sufficient: Arjuna, too, is not satisfied, repeats what he has already said and sticks to his decision not to fight.

Then Krishna starts to display the higher, all-surpassing metaphysics which on the one hand transgresses action completely towards pure intuition or knowledge and thus enters the innermost of Indian spirituality, and which on the other hand causes the more important collision between this abstraction and the practical and thereby evokes the interest to find out in which way this collision could be adjusted and solved.

Krishna's next reply, however, does not lead to such a lofty elevation; the metaphysical beginning leads first of all to common popular ideas only. Krishna says that Arjuna certainly talks wisely but that the wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. "Neither I, Krishna, have ever *not been*, nor you, nor all these kings of the mortals, nor will there be a time hereafter where we *shall cease to be*.—These bodies, animated through the unchangeable, indestructible, and imperishable soul are called perishable; therefore fight, Arjuna!—How can a man who knows that the soul is immortal think that he could have it killed or kill it? How can you come to bemoan it? But even if you believe that the soul repeatedly comes into being and dies, even then you should not grieve, for to what is born death is certain, and to what is dead birth is certain; therefore you should not grieve over the unavoidable!" A moral statement, for which we are looking, this is certainly not. It is the same what we read elsewhere: "Friend, these are mortal men, mortal men you are going to kill; yet the soul you will not kill for it cannot be killed." We find, undoubtedly, that what proves too much (killing as such does not count much in such a consideration) proves nothing.

Then Krishna continues: "Mindful of the duties of your particular caste to be fainthearted is not the proper way to behave: to a Kshatriya there is nothing nobler than war." In Schlegel's translation we read there: *In awareness of the proper duties*, etc. and here: *From a just war the warriors can only evict nobler*, thus also in what follows. Europeans, when

reading this, interpret it beyond doubt as the *duty of a soldier* as a soldier; hence these reminders have for them a moral meaning if they do not remember that in India profession and duty of a soldier are nothing per se but bound to and restricted by the caste. Wilkins gives in his translation the more precise expressions: the duties of thy particular *tribe*, and: a soldier of the *Kshatriya tribe* hath no duty superior to fighting. The general terms *proprium officium* and *milites*, as in the foregoing *religio* and *impietas* put us at first in a European way of looking at things, they deprive the contents of its coloration, tempt us too readily to misunderstand the peculiar meaning and to take the passages for something better than what they actually express. The above quoted is not at all based upon what we call duty, moral obligation, but only on natural destination. Further, Krishna causes Arjuna to consider the disgrace his behavior would draw upon himself in the opinions of friends and enemies, a suitable though in itself formal motive, dependent on what one judges as honor and disgrace.

But Krishna adds that what he has made Arjuna to consider was according to the Sankhya doctrine, now however, he would take the standpoint of the Yoga doctrine. By this the entirely strange field of Indian world-view is revealed. The compilation, the commentaries and explanations which the highly esteemed author offers us—from his profound understanding and the treasures of his scholarship—on this most striking side of the poem are of great interest. The noble strains or rather the most sublime profundity which are revealed here, makes us directly overcome the European contrast of the *practical* and the *theoretical* with which we had commenced this depiction; acting is being absorbed in knowing or rather in the *abstract meditation* of consciousness. Religion and philosophy, too, merge here in such a way that they seem to be at first indistinguishable. Thus right from the beginning the author has called the contents of the poem, as stated above, a complete *philosophical system*. In the History of Philosophy there is in general great difficulty and confusion, especially as regards the more ancient periods of a people's culture, to draw a line of demarcation between these modes of consciousness, their common feature being the highest and therefore most spiritual, dwelling in pure thought, and to discover a special characteristic according to which such contents would only belong to the one or the other region [religion or philosophy]. As regards Indian culture, such a distinction has now at last been made possible by means of extracts from truly philosophical works

of the Indians which Colebrooke has presented to the European public in *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. I, which also our author has quoted frequently; they reckon among the most precious enrichments which our knowledge was able to gain in this field.

In the philosophical systems we also see that, as in the poem under consideration, there is a fundamental difference between Sankhya doctrine and Yoga doctrine; though Sankhya seems to be at first sight a more general conception (in Colebrooke) under which also the Yoga doctrine is subsumed, there is yet the distinction of contents related predominantly to the difference of verbal expression. To begin with Sankhya, I quote from Colebrooke that a system of philosophy bears that name in which great importance is attached to the precision of *counting* or *calculating* in the enumeration of its principles; Sankhya means number, enumeration. Indeed, the philosophical systems introduced to us by him [Colebrooke] appear predominantly as enumerations of the quantities of the objects, elements, categories, etc. which each system accepts and which, thus presented one by one, are then separately commented upon and defined more in detail. The word from which Sankhya was derived would mean in general reasoning or deliberation; von Humboldt, in his remarks on Langlois' criticism of Schlegel's edition and translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in *Indian Library*, see vol. 11, no. 2, p. 236, defines the Sankhya doctrine in the same way, namely that in it reasoning and philosophical reflection is intense.

What has been stressed in the foregoing with regard to moral conceptions has appeared as very unimportant, and we would characterize these as popular, entirely common motives. Now, if what remains is the more interesting part where Krishna in his instructions obviously dwells upon the Yoga, one must remark that from the highest Indian point of view—as this is also expressed in *Bhagavad-Gita*, 5th lesson, 5th shloka—this difference disappears; both ways of thought have the one and only goal: *The one who understands, that the reasonable (Sankhya-Shastra) and the religious (Yoga-Shastra) are one and the same doctrine, is the one who verily knows* (Schlegel's translation). It should be remembered on the other hand that as much as in this final goal Indian religion and philosophy agree, the unfolding of this same goal and essentially of the path to this goal, as it has been done through and for thought, has proceeded in a way which is quite different from the religious aspect, so that it would well deserve the name of philosophy.



The path which philosophy is directed to, shows itself entirely peculiar and valuable when comparing it with the path which Indian religion partly prescribes, partly compromisingly tolerates when itself taking the turn to the elevation of the Yoga conception. Hence one would do utterly wrong to Indian philosophy, which is Sankhya doctrine, if one would judge it and its procedure by that what has been said above, what is called Sankhya doctrine in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and what does not go beyond the common, popular-religious views.

As a short definition of the Yoga doctrine it is most suitable to quote also what von Humboldt (*Indian Library*, l.c.) says about it, namely that in it that kind of *reflection* (if it can still be called so) is at work which, without reasoning, through meditation strives after a direct awareness of the truth, even after unification with primordial truth as such. To deduce from the expositions of the author what follows from this Yoga view with regard to the definition of God and man's relationship to God, and furthermore as to the aspect of action and morality, this will be dealt with in a second article.

## Second Article

After having used, in a previous article (No. 7 of these *Yearbooks*) this scholarly work of the highly respected author as an attempt to underline the consequences deriving from this famous poem regarding the moral code of the Indians, we shall now take advantage of this collection and the enlightening explanations which this extremely valuable presentation offers us as to the religious belief of this people, to reflect on some fundamental categories of it and give a critical account of them. The information which the lectures at hand contain are all the more interesting as they do not deal with some particular aspect of the immense manifold of Indian mythology, but predominantly with the *Yoga doctrine*, the nucleus of the religion of this people, which comprises the essence of their religion as well as its most sublime concept of God. This doctrine is the fundamental idea prevailing throughout the entire poem.

It must, however, be noticed that the term *Yoga doctrine* should not give rise to the misunderstanding as if Yoga were a science, a developed system [of knowledge]. It only means a doctrine in a similar sense as one speaks of a mystical doctrine in order to mark a position which, taken as a doctrine, embraces only a few statements and assertions and is for the

most part edifying, admonishing and stimulating us to the demanded edification. This is one reason why, as von Humboldt remarks, p. 33, this doctrine is an esoteric one; it can, by its very nature, not be objective for it has no developed contents that are grounded on proofs. The most sublime doctrine in India, the Vedas, are there also outwardly a mystery; only the Brahmins are actually in exclusive possession and permitted to read these books, which to the other castes is only something tolerated. The great poems *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, however, seem to be meant to grant also to this part of the nation, excluded from the Brahmins' property, religious knowledge which they, of course, can only make use of to a certain extent and in that sense which marks the very essence of the Yoga doctrine.

Von Humboldt remarks in this context that Colebrooke, in his excerpts from the philosophical systems of the Indians (*Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. I) gives only short indications of the work of Patandschali (probably a mythological figure, Colebrooke writes: Patanjali) which contains the Yoga doctrine, so that it is impossible to find out how far what Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad-Gita* corresponds to it. The *special topics*, mentioned by Colebrooke, to which the meditation in the aforesaid doctrine relates, may well contain something specific; in any case, it cannot be doubted that at least the essence of what is called Yoga and the final goal it aims at are, by and large, in both representations presented in the same way. This conclusion may already be drawn from the contents of the four chapters of Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras of which that diligent scholar gives an account, and from some further explanations which are based on these, and we shall also discover in the contents of the Gita such special aspects that are the topic of these chapters. I shall briefly mention them. The first chapter (*padu*), says Colebrooke, treats of contemplation, the second of the means to reach it; the third treats of the exercise of transcendent power, *vibhuti*, the fourth of abstraction or spiritual detachment. Colebrooke may have good reasons for not going into details as to the special topics of Patanjali's doctrine, whereas of the other doctrines he offers very extensive and distinct excerpts; it is unlikely and seems rather impossible with reference to the topic that many other wild and superstitious things, strange to us, which are not the least scientific in character, would have been reported. Even Sankhya, which is essentially different from the Patanjali doctrine, agrees with it as to the final and only aim

and is in this respect Yoga. Only the way is different; whereas Sankhya clearly gives the instruction to move towards that aim by means of reasoning, reflection on the particular objects and on the categories of nature and mind, the proper Yoga doctrine of Patanjali is engaged to reach this center without such mediation, vehemently and at once. Colebrooke explicitly begins his exposition of Sankhya with saying that the acknowledged purpose of all schools, of the theistic (to which the Patanjali doctrine belongs), the atheistic and mythological as well as that of other philosophical systems of the Indians, is to teach the means by which eternal salvation could be achieved, after or before death.

In this respect, Colebrooke quotes from the *Vedas* only one passage; of the *Vedanta* (the reasoning part of the theology of the *Vedas*) he states as its entire purpose to teach a knowledge through which the liberation from metempsychosis could be attained, and to stress this as the great aim to be attained by the means of that theology. Somewhere else (*Asiatic Researches*, IX, p. 289) he says more precisely that the followers of the *Vedas* believe that the human soul cannot only reach a perfect unity with God—to be reached as the awareness of God as taught in the *Vedas*—but that they have also indicated that through this the individual soul becomes God, even up to the attainment of the highest power. Even in the aphorisms of Nyaya, the philosophy of Gotama, of which Colebrooke gives an extensive excerpt in the second essay on Indian philosophy (*Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. I, p. 1)—a rather dry formal logic that had become the object of an immense number of commentaries in India—there is, according to Colebrooke, the promise of the same reward for the perfect knowledge of this philosophical insight. We may therefore legitimately consider what is called Yoga the focus of Indian religion and philosophy.

Now what Yoga is, the author [Wilhelm von Humboldt] explains p. 33 in its etymological as well as in its more comprehensive meaning; in *Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 2, p. 248 ff., we also find interesting discourses, by von Humboldt and von Schlegel, on the difficulties of translating such a word. Yoga is being described as the persistent direction of the mind towards the *Godhead*, whereby it withdraws from all other things, even from *self-reflective thought*, restricting as far as possible every movement and physical action, meditating only and exclusively on the essence of the Godhead, *striving to unite* with the Godhead. Von Schlegel translates this word [Yoga] with *meditation*, taking *contemplative*

*introversion* as the most obvious characteristic of a man practicing Yoga, also expressing the mystic frame of mind of such a one; yet he remarks that every translation of a very specific expression of a language by means of a single word of another language stays insufficient. This latter observation seems to be a justification of von Schlegel who translates Yoga usually with *devotio*, and the same do Langlois and Wilkins: *devotion* (*Indian Library*, l.c.p. 250); elsewhere, where the meaning does not seem to be so specific, von Schlegel uses *applicatio*, *destinatio*, *exercitatio*. There von Schlegel points, however, to the disadvantage that the reader, with all these different terms, lacks the original general concept of this word by which it would only be possible to really grasp its different applications, each one in its particular meaning, to which observations von Humboldt agrees with his total knowledge of the difficulties of translating and with a deep sense of feeling for the sufferings of the translator. It is certainly contrary to the nature of the matter to demand that a term of the language of a particular people, which has a temperament and culture contrary to ours, if such a term does not directly refer to sensuous objects such as sun, ocean, tree, rose, etc. but to something in its spiritual meaning, be rendered with a term of our language which is perfectly adequate to that term. A word of our language gives us *our* distinct concept of such a thing and hence not that of the other people which not only has a different language but also another way of looking at things. As it is spirit that all peoples have in common, and if the cultivation of it is taken for granted, the difference can only mean the relation of a meaning to the *generic notion* and to its modifications, the *species*. In a language there are for many characteristics, certainly not for all, specific terms yet not for the general subject comprehending them, or otherwise for this [general subject] so that the term is either restricted to the generic notion or else is familiar for the meaning of a particular species; thus *time* includes the filled time as well as the empty and the right time, and for that reason *tempus* must often be translated as "circumstances," "right time." What we find in dictionaries as different *meanings* of a word are mostly characteristics of the same underlying thing. Although, as von Schlegel says (*Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 2, p. 257), the European peoples are with regard to language and sense of taste, social and scientific cultivation but one large family, the difference of their languages extends to the mentioned variation and demands from a translator those qualities which alone can avoid the difficulty

and which von Schlegel has proved in a manifold of examples, namely cultivated tactfulness and ingenious talent.

Von Humboldt objects to the French translation of the term Yoga with *devotion* and the Latin one with *devotio* as not expressing the characteristic of Yoga; they do, indeed, not express the general characteristic as such and only in a modification which is not present in Yoga. The German term *Vertiefung* [contemplative meditation] used by the highly respected author, shows itself at the same time as significant and suitable; it expresses the general characteristic, the original meaning of Yoga and for which *destinatio*, *applicatio* are suitable terms. But Yoga has especially a characteristic meaning that is of interest for our knowledge of the extraordinary of the Indian religions. Wilkins says after mentioning the direct and general meaning of *junction* and *bodily or mental application*, that in the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is generally used as a theological term to express the application of the mind in spiritual things, and the performance of religious ceremonies. This specific meaning reveals itself, in expressing the general basis, as the predominant one. Our language is hardly in possession of a word which corresponds to such a characteristic because the matter is not part of our culture and religion. The suitable term *contemplative meditation* does therefore also not reach that far; Yoga in that specific characteristic is neither meditation about a thing at all, like meditating about the consideration of a painting or a scientific object, nor is it self-reflective introspection, i.e., into one's individual spirit, into sentiments or wishes of the same, etc. Yoga is rather a meditation *without any content*, the abandoning of all attention towards external things, of the activities of the senses, it is the silence of any inner sentiment, of any sign of a wish or of hope and fear, the silence of all inclinations and passions as also the absence of all images, imaginations and concrete thoughts. In so far as this elevation is only regarded as a momentary condition, we would call it *devotion*; yet our devotion has its origin in an individual spirit and is directed towards a meaningful God, is meaningful *prayer*, a fulfilled *incitation* of the religious soul. Hence one could call Yoga only an *abstract devotion* because it ascends towards the complete emptiness of subject and object and thus towards unconsciousness.

Now when proceeding to something concrete, we at once notice that this abstraction is not understood as a transient concentration, it is rather postulated as a habitual state and character of the spirit to turn

devotion into piety as such. The path to this constant meditation of the spirit has different steps and hence different values. Among thousands of mortals hardly a single one strives after perfection, and of the striving and perfect ones there is hardly a single one who knows me in reality, says Krishna (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VII, 3). To characterize the inferior perfections (thus we must call them with reference to the aforesaid) and to subordinate their value to that of the highest perfection, is a main topic of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The lesson, however, falls back for the most part to the repetition of the general commandment to meditate on Krishna; the trouble von Humboldt has taken to compile what is related, though scattered over the whole poem, makes it easier to investigate these distinctions.

That the direction of the spirit towards Krishna has taken possession of the whole person is postulated in one's indifference to the *fruits* of actions of which was spoken in the first article and which is laid stress upon in the first lessons of the poem (cf. von Humboldt, p. 5 ff.). This abandonment of the result does not mean to abstain from action as such, it rather presupposes action: but that abandonment is, XII, 11, said to be the lowest rank of perfection. If you, thus speaks Krishna, cannot even reach the preceding stage (what is meant by this will soon be explained) then, fixing your gaze upon me, be modest to give up all claims to the fruits of actions.

If this indifference to the results of action is on the one hand an element of moral intention, it is on the other hand in this generality also unspecified and therefore of a formal, even a dubious nature. For to act means nothing else than achieving some purpose; one acts to *achieve* something, some result. The realization of the purpose is a success; that the action is successful gives some satisfaction, a fruit inseparable from the performed action. Something separating may come in between the action and the achievement of the goal, and acting from duty will in many cases even know beforehand that it cannot achieve an apparent success. The more senselessly and stupidly an *action is performed*, the greater the involved indifference towards success.

The next higher step whereby perfection (*consummatio*) be reached is, XII, shloka 10, declared as a thorough concentration on the *works of Krishna* and the performance of *actions for his sake (mei gratia)*. The passage containing this latter statement von Humboldt (*Indian Library*, l.c., p. 251) regards, of the difficult shlokas 9–12, as the one which

seems to him particularly questionable. Wilkins: *Follow me in my works supreme; for by performing works for me, thou shalt attain perfection.* Von Humboldt interprets the first sentence not as a thorough concentration on the works of Krishna but as acting for the sake of Krishna in full concentration on him. *The one who performs my works*, this makes some sense which, however, is not clear immediately, and von Humboldt reminds us that this translation seems to demand something impossible of mortals; furthermore, as in general all our concepts of the impossible fail with regard to the Indian power of imagination in which *to accomplish the impossible* is quite at home, those works of Krishna obtain their detailed explanation by what follows. The question is what sort of actions the devotee is expected to perform. In III, 26, the same is stated—as on the whole all the few thoughts of this poem are repeated in the most tedious manner—that the enlightened man should perform all actions out of devotion, and then it proceeds, shloka 27, that actions are governed by the *qualities* [gunas] destined by birth; these are the three well-known categories of the Indians according to which they systematize everything. In XVIII, 40 ff., it is further explained that the specific performances of the *castes* are distributed according to these qualities. In this passage too, where the specific distinctions of the castes are explicitly discussed, von Schlegel translates—as noted in the first article—the first caste with *brahmins* (Brachmani) but the three next ones with *warriors*, *businessmen* and *servants* (milites, opifices, servi); the always repeated explanation, when mentioning the specific qualities of each caste, that these were their obligations *destined by birth* (Wilkins: *natural duty*) reads: *their by birth indwelling duties.* *Indoles* is, indeed, destination by nature in the sense of natural disposition, temperament; but that it is totally the physical event of birth through which every man's obligation is destined, this is rather obscured with this expression, to such an extent that in the sense of the European understanding of freedom one could easily understand it as the opposite, namely that it becomes dependent on temperament, on the spiritual inborn qualities, talent, genius for which walk of life, i.e., for which caste every individual destines him- or herself. One should consider it rather important to show that also this poem, which is in such a high repute as to Indian wisdom and morality, rests upon the well-known caste distinctions, without indication of any elevation to moral freedom. The first indication of the poem's containing pure moral principles we find in the

partly already mentioned, partly soon to be discussed rules of conduct with a negative intention, first of all towards the fruits of acting. Rules of conduct which by and large sound rather acceptable but are, because of their formal generality, at the same time uncertain and gain sense, meaning and value only through concrete definitions. The meaning and value of Indian religiosity and the doctrine of duty related to it, can however only be understood from the caste law—this institution that has made and still makes morality and real cultivated civilization for ever impossible among the Indians.

The order to Arjuna to fight the battle is, since he belongs to the Kshatriya caste, to act according to his natural destination, *the work which is demanded of you* (III, 19). In the very same passage, shloka 29, it is impressed on him that the *one with supreme wisdom* (cf. *Indian Library*, II, 3, p. 350) should not cause insecurity among the ignorant as regards their caste duties—which on the one hand makes good sense, on the other it comprises the perpetuation of natural destination. It is better, thus we read XVIII, 47, to fulfill one's caste duty [dharma] with *inadequate energy*; even if it is (here it is called an *attempted work*) connected with guilt, nobody should refrain from it. What else is said there, that the one who is satisfied with his performance will reach perfection when performing without ambition and desire, comprises that—as we could say—not the *outward* deeds as such (the *opus operatum*) help to attain salvation. But these statements do not have the Christian meaning that in every class the pious and right-doer pleases God, for there is no affirmative link between a spiritual God and duties and thus no inner right and conscience, since the *contents* of duty is not determined in a spiritual but in a natural way. Hence the terms *actions*, *character* which we have used above are unsuitable to be employed here because they include moral imputation and subjective singularity. Krishna says of himself, III, shloka 22: I have nothing whatsoever to obtain in the world nor is there anything unobtained that should be obtained, *yet I continue to work* (*versor tamen in opere*); for should I ever not engage unwearied, men would be ruined (Wilkins: *this world would fail in their duty*), I should be the cause of what, of the *mixture of castes* and spoil these people (Wilkins: *I should drive the people from the right way*). The common terms *duty*, *right way*—the Englishman corrects *opus* as *moral actions* or *spoil*, *destruction* and the *opus* which Krishna unwearily performs cease to be empty declamations only when they are given peculiar contents



and meaning. This is stated as the *mixture of castes*, Wilkins: *I should be cause of spurious births*; von Schlegel only *colluvies* [mixture]—a word which as such is not sufficiently defined; more precise it says (in the passage cited in the first article) *colluvies ordinum* [mixture of classes], the specific varna-sankara, as it obviously reads in the original text. Instead of the work of wisdom, goodness and justice which, in a more sublime religion, is recognized as the work of the divine world-order, the work permanently performed by Krishna is the conservation of caste distinctions. To the works obligatory on man there belong essentially *offerings* and acts of worship in general,—a fundament which could at first sight appear as a region where those natural distinctions, as in our society the distinction of classes, education, talent, etc. would vanish, and man as man would be equal in his relationship to God. But this is not the case: the religious rituals as well as such things which are to be observed when performing the most unimportant and superficial things in daily life, are prescribed according to caste; it goes without saying that the Brahmin caste is also distinguished in their being subject to thousands and thousands of absurd regulations of a crude superstition. It is to be understood in this context what Wilford (*Asiatic Researches*, XI, p. 122) remarks on the relation of Indian religion with regard to Europeans and Non-Indians. The Indians do not accept proselytes in the sense that we all belong to them, but to the lowest class; from this the members of this church cannot change to a higher one before death, and then, if they so deserve, they may be reborn in India into one of the four castes. In the cycle (*orbis*, Wilkins: *wheel*) of offering and worship in general, man, God or Brahman and deities, which is referred to in shloka 41, 14 ff., the most important moment is, that what we would consider the subjective intention and act of the devotee is Brahman itself; but I shall come back to this when dealing with the concept of Brahman. Ranking above the two perfections, the indifference towards the fruits and the spiritual direction towards Krishna as far as our works are concerned, the higher step is mentioned which leaves behind works or actions, worship as well as any kind of performance. This, XII, shloka 9, reads in von Schlegel's translation: *assiduitatis devotio* [devotion of perseverance]—a term which, as von Humboldt remarks in *Indian Library*, I.c., p. 251, is obscure. He mentions (*Asiatic Researches*, XI., p. 252) that the term used in the original text (it seems to be *abhyasah*) has been left out completely by the translator somewhere else (VIII, 89), though in the preceding

and succeeding shlokas various states were described. Maybe that there von Schlegel, with his *ad devotionem exercendam* [for the practicing of devotion], wanted to point to assiduity; but indeed, only when realizing that this assiduity must be given special attention, it becomes obvious that in VIII, 8–10 too the gradation of perfections is meant, the very same as in XII, 9–12. Wilkins uses the equally vague words *practice* and *constant practice*.

What this assiduity actually is can be derived from the preceding and the succeeding grades. The former cannot do away with the direction towards Krishna devotion, only with the works; the succeeding, highest grade is the achieved unity and dwelling with God, devoid of works and longing. Hence the intermediate grade is the constant devotion. We may reverse the term *devotio assiduitatis* and call it perseverance of devotion. Its further definitions are partly given as characterization of the *Bhagavad-Gita* itself, but it is partly this grade which itself was necessarily the most striking thing to all having dealt with Indian topics. First of all I mention with reference to what we have previously discussed that it [*devotio assiduitatis*], since it begins to bring to light a specific characteristic of Indian religiosity, namely the *purely negative* attitude of spirituality, is a contradiction to that *way of acting* which Krishna had previously demanded of Arjuna. It is one of the tedious aspects of the poem to see how this contradiction between the instruction to act and the instruction to refrain from action and to firmly and solely concentrate on Krishna always comes to the fore, without finding a solution of this contradiction. Yet the solution is impossible because the most sublime in Indian mentality, the absolute Being, Brahman, is as such without qualities, and apart from Oneness, these qualities can only be external, natural ones. In this separation of the universal and the concrete both are spiritless—that as empty Oneness, this as unfree manifold; man as bound to this is only subject to life's law of nature; elevating himself to that extreme, he is on the escape and in a state of negating all concrete, spiritual activity. The unification of these extremes, as it appears in the preceding grade of Indian perfection, can thus only be indifference within the laws of nature towards these works themselves, not a fulfilled, appeasing spiritual center. There can be no doubt as to the peculiar mode of practicing assiduity. It is the well-known Indian practice of enforced withdrawal and the endurance of the monotony of a deed—and thoughtless state.

It is the rigor to maintain one's life in empty absurdity, not the rigor of practicing the penances of fasting, chastisement, carrying the cross, of stupid obedience to actions and outward deeds, etc., with which there is at least connected a manifold of physical movements as also of feelings, imaginations and spiritual agitation. Those exercises are also not undertaken for the sake of penance but just in order to attain perfection; when using the term *penances* for those exercises we attribute to them a quality they do not involve and thus changes their meaning. The ones who undergo the exercises are normally called Yogis. Of them also the Greeks had heard; to this relates what they report about the Gymnosophists.

What here is called *assiduitatis devotio* amounts to what Colebrooke mentions with reference to Patanjali's *Yoga Shastra* (3rd chapter), namely that it is the preceding grade to the most sublime, the attainment of salvation. He says that this chapter contains almost exclusively instructions for physical and mental exercises, consisting of an intensive mental meditation, linked to the keeping of breath and inactivity of the senses, performed in a steady posture with prescribed positions. On p. 34 von Humboldt refers to this passage and concludes from the expression *meditation on special topics*—on which we have already commented above—that it seems that the gazing meditation of the Yogi could also have been fixed on other things than the Godhead. Colebrooke's quotation is very vague; reflecting on certain things and hence knowledge of and in thoughts is rather the characteristic of Sankhya doctrine. Although the meditation of one acknowledging the Patanjali doctrine as a philosophical system were only of a minor dimension, there is no place for such a kind of meditation in common Indian Yoga. All descriptions and instructions depict it as an exercise or exertion for outer and inner impassivity. Too often the *Bhagavad-Gita* pronounces *to think nothing* as a necessity, as in VI, 19–27, of which I cite part of von Humboldt's translation, to give also of this an example; the preserved meter of the original, which might have caused a lot of difficulties, appears here in a specially suitable way, since its slow pace forces the reader to meditate on the contents, which deals with meditation; it reads:

In Yoga man must meditate, aloof of senses' lure, entirely renouncing all desires born of selfishness, restraining by strength of mind all senses totally. *Let him attain, step by step, tranquility, mental steadfastness, having fixed the mind on his inner self, not thinking anything else;*

(Schlegel: *nihilum quidem cogitet*)

[he might verily think nothing]

whereto, wherunto the *unsteady* wavering mind goes astray,  
therefrom, from there let him lead it back to the *control of the indwelling self*.

Von Humboldt compiles more rules and characteristics given in the poem on the exercises of the Yogi, p. 35: in a deserted clean location the Yogi should occupy not too high and not too low a seat, covered with animal [deer] skins and kusha-grass (Brahmins always have something to do with this grass, *poa cynosuroides* according to von Humboldt, after Wilson); his neck and nape of the neck uncovered, the body be kept in balance, the breath deeply inhaled, and in equal rhythm exhaled and inhaled, not looking around, his eyes directed towards the center of the eyebrows and the tip of the nose and uttering the famous syllable *Om*! Von Humboldt refers, p. 36, to the Yogi watched by Warren Hastings, convulsively praying the rosary (since the Indians, too, have been using it from ancient times), and to Hastings' remark that since for many generations men, in their daily routines and practiced throughout their lives are used to live in abstract contemplation and that, while each one contributes some knowledge to the treasure collected by his predecessors, one might well conclude that these collective studies have made them discover new tracks and combinations of the mind (*new tracks and combinations of sentiment*) which are entirely different from the teachings of other nations and, for they spring from a source devoid of any admixture of the accidental, might be of equal truth as our abstract teachings (*the most simple of our own*, soon afterwards *the most abstruse of ours*). Von Humboldt is right to not pay much attention to such a conception and puts it on a level with the fanciful mysticism of other peoples and religions. One notices, indeed, that the Governor General was well aware that knowledge is achieved only by means of abstraction from the sensible and through reflection, but he does not distinguish herefrom the vacant gaze of the Indian wherein thought remains equally motionless and inactive as the senses and feelings should be forced to inactivity. I would also not like to compare under this aspect Yoga with the mysticism of other peoples and religions since this has been rich in spiritual productions, often supremely pure, most sublime and beautiful ones; for it [mysticism of other peoples and religions] is at once a self-reflection of the outwardly calm soul and an unfolding of the rich thing to which it is related and of its relations to this thing. The Indian isolation of the soul into emptiness is rather a stupefaction which

perhaps does not at all deserve the name mysticism and which cannot lead to the discovery of true insights, because it is void of any content.

More details about the exercises of the Yogis, apart from sitting or standing motionless over a period of many years, even for a span of life, we can gather from other reports of which I would like to mention the most unusual one. Captain Turner who had made a journey to Tibet to the Dalai Lama, reports of a Yogi whom he met on the journey and who had laid himself under the obligation to stay on foot for twelve years and during that time never sit or lie down in order to sleep. To get used to this, he had tied himself in the beginning to trees, posts, etc.; soon he had grown into that habit so that it was no longer painful for him to sleep while standing. When Turner talked to him, he was returning from a journey—the obligatory twelve years of which were coming to an end—and which had taken him to part of Asiatic Russia, the vast land of the Tartars and to China; and now he had reached the second stage of his exercises. The rigidity which he was practicing during these second twelve years consisted in keeping his arms stretched out, hands folded, over his head, again without residing in a permanent place. He was on horseback, two companions took care of him and helped him mounting and dismounting the horse. The arms were completely white and hard, yet the Yogi said that they had means to make them elastic and sensitive again. He was still facing the other obligatory exercises in order to attain perfection. These are: to sit during the hot season for 3 and  $3/4$  hours with raised hands between five flames, four burning close to him towards the four quarters of the sky, the fifth being the sun above his bare head which he had to face constantly; furthermore being swung back and forth over a flame, again for 3 and  $3/4$  hours, and finally being buried alive for 3 and  $3/4$  hours, standing with quite some feet of soil over his head. After having endured all this, the Yogi is one who has attained perfection. Last year, according to English reports, an Indian who had undergone the previous rigors now underwent the swinging over the fire; he was tied with a rope round one of his legs to a high beam; the head hung downwards over the fire so that the flames reached the tips of his hair. After half an hour one saw blood streaming out of mouth and nose of the one patiently enduring this, whereupon he was taken down, lifeless.

In *Ramayana*, vol. I, sect. 32, in the episode dealing with the birth of Ganga (cf. *Indian Library*, vol. I, sect. I) we also come across rigidities, practiced by a descendant of Sagara, king of Ayodhya. One of the wives

of this king had given birth to a *pumpkin* with 60,000 sons; they were slain but meant to be accepted in heaven if Ganga would wet them. This was effected by the king through his rigidities. Besides sitting between the five flames in the hot season, in the cold season he lay in cold water, stood in the rainy season exposed to the down pouring clouds, living on fallen leaves, his thoughts introverted. Many of the superstitious exercises of penance invented in Europe we meet with also in India in the same or similar form, as the above mentioned repetition of words using the rosary, the pilgrimage where after a number of steps forward a number of backward steps is done, or while the whole body is lying on the ground moving on the stomach towards a distant pagoda, this also with interruption of the forward movement by backward movement, for which many years are needed.

The negative nature of the most sublime in Indian religiosity is also satisfied with a wholly abstract renunciation, devoid of any state of emotion,—the direct killing. Thus many have themselves crushed under the wheels of the chariot of the idol of Jagannath which needs five hundred men in order to be moved when at the great festival it is being dragged round the pagoda.<sup>3</sup> Many, especially women, ten, twenty together, holding hands throw themselves into the Ganga or also, after having climbed the Himalayas, into the snow and the ravines of the source of the Ganga, or they burn themselves after the husband's or a child's death, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Now what the Yogi first of all achieves through the devotion of assiduity is the miraculous ability of an *unlimited power* (*transcendent power*). Von Humboldt comments on this magic power on but he remarks of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that in this poem, which is also purer in this respect, such superstitious tricks do not occur and that the term

<sup>3</sup> It is reported that in recent years at the festival which formerly had attracted millions not so many devotees were present to move the chariot. The bare seacoast on which the temple is located is for miles covered with skeletons of pilgrims who have succumbed to the pilgrimage and its exercises.

<sup>4</sup> Two English officers who last year witnessed the burning of a low class woman, carrying the dead child in her arms, turned to the husband, after having failed to persuade the woman; he, however, replied that he could spare this woman for he had still three of them at home, and that the burning would bring much glory to him and his family (and without doubt also to his ancestors).

*vibhuti*, which means this power, is not used with reference to mortals but only in the context of *becoming God* and in so far as it affects one's mind in overcoming doubt and the senses. *Vibhuti* is (*Indian Library* III, 11, No. 3, p. 253) commented on with reference to X, 7 where Krishna relates it to himself; there von Schlegel translates it as *maiestas* which von Humboldt does not appreciate for it mentions too little or not at all the peculiarity of the meaning. (Cf. *Radices Sanscritae* [Roots of Sanskrit], Berlin, 1827, p. 122 of the young scholar Dr. Rosen, which passage my colleague Bopp mentions for an explanation of *vibhuti*). As to the other remark of the highly esteemed author, may I draw attention to the fact that Yoga removes the characteristic of what we conceive as mortals and that, if that power is attributed to those who have become divine and to Krishna, this at once means that it can be attained by mortals who are perfect Yogis. But that in the poem no detailed characteristics of this power are mentioned, the reason for this is the following: whereas it is already rather surprising that for the time of this dialogue, which is the poem, that moment has been chosen where Arjuna is expected to begin the battle, it would have been a downright inaptitude if Krishna with his assurances that the Yogi would become one with him, and after having revealed to the contemplating Arjuna (lesson XI) his whole being, had also explained to him the particular qualities of that power. It would have been too obvious that Arjuna had expected to be bestowed with this power by Krishna, by means of which he could at once without fighting destroy the enemy's army. It seems that Arjuna, after having been graced to visually realize the essence of Krishna, would have perfectly valid claims to this power. This would have made the position even more oblique than it is already.

Yogis and magicians are, as von Humboldt continues (p. 41), referring to Colebrooke, for the Indian *masses* synonymous terms. One could misunderstand this in the sense that the belief in such a power could only be found among common people. Colebrooke, however, remarks in that passage that the Yoga doctrine of Patanjali as well as the Sankhya doctrine maintain that man can achieve in this life such a transcendent power as contained in Sankhya; the latter is, as we have already seen, the specifically developed logic and metaphysics, and both doctrines or philosophies are on the whole a higher study which goes beyond and exalts the common people; Colebrooke also adds that this doctrine is generally accepted among the Indians, as will be shown more in detail

in what follows. It is remarkable to see the special characteristics of that power which the one devoted to Yoga should achieve. According to Colebrooke it says in the third chapter, dealing with *vibhuti* in Patanjali's teaching, that the adept will achieve knowledge of all things, the past and future, the distant and secret ones; he reads the thoughts of others, gains the strength of an elephant, the courage of a lion and the speed of the wind; he flies in the air, swims in water, dives into the soil, sees all worlds in *one* view (more than all the above mentioned and what is related to it, Arjuna has achieved) and performs other extraordinary deeds. Sankhya does not fall short of this description; Colebrooke gives the following extract: This power is eightfold and consists of the capacity to shrink to a tiny shape which can pass through everything, or to expand to a gigantic stature, to make oneself lightweighted (like climbing up a sunbeam towards the sun), to possess unlimited scope of the senses (like to touch the moon with the fingertip), irresistible will (like sinking into the soil as easily as into water), control over all animate and inanimate things; the power of changing the course of nature, the capacity to achieve everything one longs for.

In a still higher degree this power of contemplative meditation is depicted when in the cosmo- and theogonies, as for instance in the one with which Manu's *Book of Laws* commences, it is expressed as the power that has created the world. After the eternal power by its thought had first created water and implanted in it the seed that turned into an egg, Brahman Himself, was born through His very thought. He then divided His substance into masculine and feminine, and Manu states of himself that he is the person, the molder of the entire visible world that sprang from the male power, *viraj*, after having performed *austere devotion*. Shiva too, in *Ramayana*, book I, undergoes a course of holy rigidities on the northern side of the snow-covered Himavut, together with his spouse Uma who after having been deprived by Indra and other gods of the conception of a son, cursed all gods and recluses in deep wrath and pain. In the preceding story of Shiva's wedding with Uma and of the hundred years he spent embracing her, during which time he refrained from his outward occupation of destruction, the same expressions, *engaged with the goddess in mortification* (according to the English translation) are also used. The fruit of these hundred years of seclusion which Uma has hoped to conceive, is being described in what follows (to render in modern languages what happened, can be an embarrassment



for a translator; the English translators at Serampore had already mentioned, with reference to the preceding, that the *gross indelicacy* had not permitted to render literally the words of the original text).

The most detailed and brilliant representation of what one can achieve through Yoga is given in the episode which deals with Vishvamitra in the Indian national epos *Ramayana*. I shall briefly depict the main points, partly to complete the idea of this most essential aspect of Indian mentality, partly with relation to another most interesting characteristic which is attached to it.

Vasishtha, a Brahmin, lives in a hermitage covered with flowers, creepers, etc., observing sacred rituals, surrounded by wise men who are dedicated to offering and the repetition of the holy name, these being the Balukhilya sages, 60,000 sprung from Brahma's hair, having the size of thumbs, the Vikhanusas, other pygmy sages, from the nails of Brahma, etc. Vishvamitra (now the guide and companion of Rama, the hero of the epic, and his brother Lakshmana) came—as a mighty king who had blessed his subjects for some thousand years and was now traversing the earth with a big army—to that sage who was in possession of the cow Shubala (as the common symbol of the productivity of the earth) which the king wanted to have and eventually confiscated, after having offered in exchange for her, but in vain, 100,000 cows, 14,000 elephants bridled with pure gold, and 100 golden chariots, each drawn by four white horses. Shubala escapes to Vasishtha who saying that he could not quarrel with the mighty king, the master of so many elephants, horses, and soldiers, etc., is reminded by her that the power of a *Kshatriya* was not greater than that of a *Brahmin*; Brahmin power being divine, much nobler than that of a monarch. Then Shubala produces for Vasishtha an army of 100 Pahlawa (Pelhvi, Persian) kings, meant to destroy the army of Vishvamitra; but he kills them with his arrows. The cow produces other troops, Shakas, Yavanas (whom one associates with Javan, Ionian), etc.; through the arrows of the king they face the same fate as the others. Vasishtha asks the cow to provide more troops who then destroy the army of Vishvamitra, whose 100 sons, furiously attacking the Brahmin, are burned by him with a loud blast from his navel. Such is the power of a Brahmin.

Then the king bequeaths his kingdom to his only remaining son and retreats to the wilderness of the Himuvut. In order to win the grace of Mahadeva (Shiva), he performs the most rigid exercises, stands on the

tips of his big toes, hands raised, for a hundred years, like a snake, nourished by air. The god grants the king the wanted art of archery in full which he uses to take revenge on Vasishtha, burns down and destroys the forest—the place of Vasishtha's devotion—so that the sages, animals and birds flee by thousands. But this weapon which terrifies the gods and all the three worlds is being destroyed by the plain stick of Vasishtha. The king, sighing heavily when confronted with the power of a Brahmin, begins a new course of rigid exercise and abstractions of his thought in order to attain brahminhood, and thus he spends a thousand years.

After that time Brahma, Lord of the world, declares him a royal sage. Vishvamitra reacts with despondency and annoyance: After having performed all such exercises a royal sage *only*! I consider myself nothing! And he begins again with his abstractions. Meanwhile prince Trishanku, a man of truth and subdued passions, has the idea of performing a sacrificial offering in order to be elevated to heaven [svarga] even with his mortal body. Vasishtha, whom he approaches in this regard, tells him that this is impossible, he curses him and transforms him into a low, casteless creature, chandala. Vishvamitra whom he now approaches as to his desired place in heaven, is ready to help him saying that this is in his power and he would bring it about. He prepares for a sacrificial ritual [yajna] to which he invites Vasishtha and his ascetics, who however declines: How should the Lord of the heavens eat from an offering where the priest is a Kshatriya, accept gifts offered by a chandala? The gods, too, reject the invitation. The great Vishvamitra, enraged, takes the ladle and says that he would bring it about in virtue of his performed rigidities and his self-obtained vigour. Then prince Trishanku rose directly up to heaven; Indra, king of the heavens, throws him down to the earth. While falling, Trishanku calls Vishvamitra by name: Help! Help! Vishvamitra, enraged, shouts: Stop! Stop! Thus Trishanku stops between heaven and earth. Vishvamitra in his anger creates seven other great sages (the Pleiades in the southern sky, says the commentator) and, when seeing them in their place, still other families of heavenly bodies, and then another Indra and another sphere of gods [devas]. The gods and the sages, benumbed with surprise, then turn to Vishvamitra with the humble request not to insist on the promotion to heaven without purification (for re-entering the caste) of one cursed by Brahmins and to destroy the order of things. The king stays firm: what he had

promised must not be unfulfilled; they then come to an understanding as to a place for Trishanku in the sky, outside the solar system.

After thousand years of performed abstractions, Brahma declares the king a chief sage. Not satisfied with this, he starts a new course; then a beautiful girl (Menaka, to become the mother of Shakuntala) joins and entices him so that he fritters away with her twenty-five years. Awakening from this oblivion, he begins with another thousand years of rigidity. The gods get frightened that he, with his stupendous exercises, would cause bad luck to all of them. Brahma then explains to him that he would make him the superior of the chief sages. Replying to Vishvamitra's objection that with this he would not yet be declared a Brahma-sage, Brahma says: You have not yet overcome your passions, anger, and lust, how can you ask for brahminhood?<sup>5</sup>

Vishvamitra resumes his exercises; in vain does Indra tempt him with the most beautiful Apsara, in vain does he provoke him to anger. After the chief of the sages has been silent for a thousand years and has held his breath, the god of the heavens, Indra, as well as the other gods are overcome with great fear and turn to Brahma: In this great sage there is no more the slightest shadow of sin; if his spiritual desire will not be fulfilled, he, with his abstraction, will destroy the universe. The extremes of the world are in disarray, the oceans are raged by storm, the mountains are about to come down, the earth is trembling, etc. O Brahma, we cannot guarantee that men will not turn atheists, the world is filled with surprise and disorder. Hence Brahma finally declares Vishvamitra a *Brahma-sage*, who becomes reconciled with Vasishtha.

This story is highly characteristic regarding the core of the Indian world-view. The basic relation of all religion and philosophy is first the relation of the spirit in general to nature and then that of the absolute spirit to the finite spirit. The fundamental Indian conception is that the abstract spirituality, the concentration of the pure unmodified and

<sup>5</sup> An interesting example how also through the abstract exercises great power is attained, even when the mastery of passions is not yet achieved, we find in the episode of the *Mahabharata*, Sunda and Upasunda, with which my scholarly friend and colleague Prof. Bopp has acquainted the public in *Arjuna's Travel to Indra's Heaven*, 1824, translation p. 37. In the same scholar's *Conjugation System of Sanskrit* he has given a translation of the Vishvamitra episode; in my extract I had at hand the English translation of the Serampore edition of the *Ramayana*.

unlimited abstraction, is the absolute power of the natural; it is the point of the negativity of thought, the pure subjectivity of the spirit in which everything specific and all natural power is reduced to something powerless, dependent and vanishing. But the abstract subjectivity appears here first and foremost as concentration which *man* produces in himself; how it is related to God or rather Brahma I shall deal with later.

This episode is particularly characteristic with regard to the relationship of a Kshatriya to a Brahmin on which I shall first dwell. Those various courses of mortification in the assiduity of meditation are to be undertaken to make a Kshatriya achieve what a Brahmin is already from the very beginning, i.e., by birth. If a man of another caste can only be reborn by means of the wearisome hardships and conditions of outer and inner abstraction, which we have mentioned, the Brahmin is as such at once a *twice-born*, a name which in the *Ramayana* is attached to a Brahmin like a title. In the *Laws of Manu* (I, 93–100) where in the hierarchy of existing things the Brahmin caste is presented as the most excellent one, there is also mentioned a gradation among the Brahmins themselves and stated that those of them who know their duties excel, among these again those who perform them virtuously, and among them those longing for salvation by means of a thorough knowledge of the holy teachings. These gradations are partly not dependent on those exercises in the Indian way nor on the more spiritual attainment of an intellectual and real moral education; it is partly the reading of the Vedas which the Brahmins possess and the rules of conduct which they are bound to obey, the very position of these twice-born by nature, the unity with God. When the Englishman in the cited passage from Manu uses the European terms of duty and virtuous conduct, they are only meant in the formal sense of the strict observation of his [the Brahmin's] caste commands. To these do not belong political duties of citizens nor to pay taxes. "The king, even if he dies of want, is not allowed to levy taxes upon a Brahmin, for he is well versed in the Vedas." Yet the Brahmin is forbidden to kill, to steal; he can, however, not be sentenced for such crimes, yet he can be—his remaining properties staying untouched—expatriated. To him unlike the common Indian—there are also no binding moral duties of charity. A Brahmin is permitted or even obliged to kill the Chandala who would come too close to him and could thus, by touching, pollute him; even less is it his moral duty to help such a one lying in front of him,

dying of starvation, when he actually could save him from death with a small help, a sip of water, just as little as he is obliged to practice charity towards others. The expected morality restricts itself to the negative, the control of passions; *a man of subdued passions*, this expression one reads everywhere as a quality of the wise man. However important the absence of evil inclinations and feelings is, it is not yet virtue and practiced morality. The affirmative duties of the Brahmin consist in an endless number of observations of the emptiest and most absurd rules and the reading of and meditation on the Vedas. When we read the teachings and the rules, which are expressed in common language, we are too easily tempted to interpret them in the sense of our morality; their comprehension lies solely in their real contents.<sup>6</sup> Scholarship in itself is mentioned as a subordinate grade; of absolute value is the reading of the Vedas; the firm command over and meditating on them is as such already the supreme wisdom. What a lack of spirit even the immensely meritorious reading of the Vedas permits, Colebrooke tells us (*Asiatic Researches*, VIII, p. 390), where he mentions the various superstitious ways to perform this reading—that is to say, either in a way that every word is spoken individually or that the words are repeated alternately backwards or forwards, and again only once or several times, for which purpose specially arranged copies are being produced, the names of

<sup>6</sup> Partly in order to provide a better idea and partly in order to prove these incredible absurdities, a few of the many rules of the Laws of Manu may be particularly mentioned (in the first few hours of the day a Brahmin can commit some 40 mistakes: whether he gets out of bed with the right or the left foot first, slips first into the right or left slipper, etc.). The Brahmin (IV, 43) is not permitted to look at his wife or his wives (for he may have several)—in whose company he should not eat—while they eat, sneeze, yawn, etc. He should not eat dressed with one garment only; he should not urinate or defecate on a road, nor on ashes, nor in cow pastures, nor in ploughed land nor in water or on firewood, nor (except in great urgency) on a mountain, on the ruins of a temple, nor at any time on an anthill; nor into trenches inhabited by living creatures; neither while walking nor when standing; nor on the banks of a river, nor on the peak of a mountain; he should never void feces or urine facing something moved by the wind, nor when facing fire, a priest, the sun, water or cattle. When doing this during the daytime he must turn to the north, at night towards the south, mornings and evening in the same position as by day, etc. As to eating habits, he has to observe innumerable things.

which are mentioned there by Colebrooke, so that one need not pay any attention as to the correct order of the senseless reading.

The transcendent power that is, according to the aforesaid, ascribed to Vasishtha is not a poetic license to indulge in such inventions. Our ideas of arbitrary fiction in poetry are unsuitable in relation to Indian productions. The supreme distinction of Brahmins is an essential part of the system of lawgiving, and the conception of that excessive power is part of the law itself. Among the extensive descriptions of the duties and rights of the Brahmins in the Codex [Manusmṛiti] we find also the following: A Brahmin is not in need of complaining to the king in cases of injustice and breach of law for he himself by authority of his own power, can punish his offenders. The king, even when in greatest trouble, should be on his guard in no way to annoy a Brahmin; for once annoyed they could immediately destroy him together with his troops, elephants, horses and chariots. Who could provoke, without being destroyed, these holy men by whom the all consumptive flame was created, the ocean with undrinkable water and the moon with its waning and waxing? Which prince could gather riches if he were to oppress those who, enraged, could create other worlds and rulers of the worlds and who could grant existence to other gods and mortals? Which man who values his life will insult those through whom the worlds and gods continue to be—*those who are rich in the knowledge of the Vedas*? A Brahmin, *be he learned or unlearned*, is a powerful godhead, just as fire, whether sacred or not, is a powerful godhead (Manu's Book of Law by W. Jones, ch. IX, 317). The Brahmin, while reading the Vedas and performing his duty-bound works, i.e., observing what is prescribed for all daily, is perfect and lives in perfection; the above mentioned difference means, as in the *Bhagavad-Gita* the grades of Yoga, the different value of its performances with reference to the different grades of perfection, the highest of these being the reading of and the meditation on the Vedas, the grade of the sage and of salvation. We may presume that of those belonging to other castes there might only be a few who, by means of the assiduous practices mentioned, would attempt to attain that high rank which the Brahmin possesses without these practices. The above mentioned examples are sporadic phenomena happening as rarely as the also mentioned religious self-immolation happens frequently. This, however, does not effect the unity with God and transcendent power nor the liberation from the transmigration of the souls, which is the aim

of the one who commits himself to a carefully planned self-immolation and to the state of conscious unconsciousness. Krishna complained (see above) about the small number of those in search of perfection, and Captain Wilford, speaking from his own experience, says in this regard: Though the Indians talk much of the attainment of salvation by means of Yoga, I have not come across a single Indian willing to choose this path; they mentioned that a renunciation of the world and its pleasures be asked for, a complete self-denial and that they could not have any idea of the pleasures of the promised salvation as there was no eating, drinking, marriage, etc. involved. As against this, in worldly paradise (we could call it *Swargabhumi*, as distinguished from *Moksha* or that kind of salvation) one would eat, drink, marry, etc. The Brahmins are not under the obligation to observe these rigid abstinences expected of the other castes for attaining perfection. Among the Fakirs more in the north of Hindustan, Captain Raper (*Asiatic Researches*, XI) mentions a group called *Yogis* but are listed as a special sect. As much as they, like the other Fakirs, belong to Indian religion and are partly devotees of Shiva, partly those of Vishnu (Raper mentions also a sect among these Fakirs who are devotees of Nanak, founder of the Sikh sect), so much they have freed themselves of Brahminic superiority and adopt sometimes in a very careless way, without undergoing those wearisome mortifications, the privileges which the Brahmins enjoy by birth and the living habits of their caste.

We have taken the supernatural power as belonging to the third stage of Yoga. The satisfaction of this stage is, for it is not the highest, also not of the highest grade. Here I must point to what von Humboldt has compiled p. 41 from the poem as to this, so to say, relative salvation, distinguishing this fate from absolute salvation. This fate namely is elevation to the immaculate realms of those who know the highest (XIV, 14 f.). Von Humboldt sees in this, and he is certainly correct, the same as living in the worlds of those who have been immaculate, which covers a period of countless years before a new rebirth into the finite world (VI, 41, 42). Such a one must certainly undergo rebirth because he has not absolutely completed devotion (Wilkins: interrupted by death; von Schlegel in general: *the one who has fallen away from devotion*), but he is reborn in a *pious* and respected family (von Schlegel only writes: *a pure and prosperous family*), or in the one of a *Yogi* rich in wisdom; such a rebirth is (as we have seen) very hard to achieve in this world. In

IX, 20–2, the same is repeated. Von Humboldt adds that rebirth in the earthly world after exhaustion of the achieved merits is depicted as the destiny of those who have stuck to the holy scriptures and the there prescribed ceremonies in a limited way only; in von Schlegel's translation it says (shloka 21): *Thus abiding by the injunction of the sacred books and desiring desires, they attain to the state of going and returning* [death and rebirth]; for also otherwise the *Bhagavad-Gita* opposes the teachings of the Vedas and scholarly theology, not rejecting them completely but presenting them as not having delved into the ultimate reason, not reaching the final aim (II, 41–53). We have mentioned the *reading* of the Vedas as the most sacred performance of the Brahmins; in order not to discover in this a contradiction to what von Humboldt says about the relation of the ideas of the poem to the Vedas, we must recollect that in order to reach highest perfection the Brahmins are also held to subdue their passions and that II, 41 ff. the reading of the Vedas *as such* as characteristic for the Brahmin is not the question, but that what is being blamed here is rather the wrong and insufficient use made of these books and their rules [of conduct]. Von Schlegel interprets this passage in a much stronger sense, namely as criticizing the Vedas themselves (*Indian Library*, no. 2, p. 237) in so far as the poet attacks and accuses them [the Vedas] that they too favored a secular world-view by promising blessings for formal religious practices, and he holds that the poet, because of the audacity of his undertaking, had purposely veiled himself in obscurity. Interestingly, von Schlegel expresses his confidence to prove this later in a philosophical interpretation of the poem. For the time being we can only refer to the various translations, and all of them express the same essential substance as also done by Langlois in the passages cited for other reasons (*Indian Library*, no. 2, p. 235): *The author (of the poem) criticizes the behavior of the religious hypocrites who for personal interests observe the prescribed rules of the Vedas, and he concludes: they also practice them, act accordingly but without the dignified retention of the sage.* And further, p. 238, referring to shloka 45: *Krishna tells Arjuna that the interpretation of the Vedas can be done in a way that either favors those who cherish the truth or cherish the passions, or darkness* (in keeping with the three above mentioned qualities which are throughout the three fundamental categories). The English translation gives the same meaning as Langlois, yet here and there in a more distinct way than in Schlegel's interpretation which reads, shloka 41–3: *The thoughts of the*



*undecided men are many-branched and endlessly diverse* (cf. von Humboldt on Langlois, l.c., p. 236). *Those obsessed by desires and devoted to the letters of the Vedas only, declaring that besides these there is nothing, are unwise; they, regarding the attainment of heaven as the highest aim, proclaim this in flowery words, with rebirth as the fruit of actions, and lay down specific rites for the attainment of pleasure and heavenly glory. Those whose minds are carried away by such words and are deeply attached to pleasure and glory in heaven cannot attain that insight which is determinate [in its concentration on God] and rooted in contemplation.*

Herein I cannot discover anything else than that it deals with the misuse of the Vedas (*libr. sacr. dictis gaudentes* Wilkins translates with *delighting in the controversies of the Vedas*), expressly by men who are still obsessed with false ideas and desires, in a sense as we speak of misusing the Bible which has been cited in favor of all sorts of false ideas, of which one might also state that they had been caused by sayings of the Bible; this would not affect in the negative authority and true contents of the Bible because it is the error itself that causes this misuse. Right in the beginning of shloka 46 one reads that as is the use of a well filled with water so is the manifold use of the Vedas by the *enlightened Brahmin*—just as our theologians are sophisticated enough to base their arbitrary opinions upon the Bible. Should *prudens theologus* mean something more genuine than a sophisticated theologian (Wilkins: *knowing divine*), this would always imply that it refers to a manifold use of the Vedas. In IX, 20, those who know the *three* Vedas (that there are four is not mentioned here) and, after sacrifices and cleansing of sins, drink the soma juice are promised enjoyment of the holy world of Indra. But in VIII, 11 ff. Krishna reveals Arjuna the innermost and most sublime, i.e., Yoga, and he stresses particularly that this is the pure path taught by the knowers of the Vedas, these being no others than Brahmins, and are not permitted to be Non-Brahmins. In the most definite way it reads XV, 15: *I (Krishna) am to be known by all the Vedas*, I am the author of the theological doctrine (*Vedanta*) and (according to von Schlegel) the propounder of the Vedas (Wilkins: *I am who knowed the Veds* [sic]). It is the Brahmin who is in possession of wisdom, knowledge and the interpretation of the Vedas; Krishna *identifies* himself—not only calling himself as being in conformity—with the Brahmins, just as he is also identical with the Vedas—but of this later. Krishna informs Arjuna about the essential wisdom of these books and that of the Brahmins, since Arjuna is a Kshatriya

and therefore not in possession of it. Hence the *Bhagavad-Gita* as such is to be understood as the passing on of this wisdom to the nation whereby what otherwise would stay unknown and inaccessible to the people is being made generally known—in an adequate way, that is to say in a poetic work. Both the national epics of India provide the Indians with what Homer's epics provided the Greeks: the instruction about their religion, for there is no other source for these peoples. Religious cult in itself is not instructive. The Greek poets, too, who according to the famous passage of Herodotus had presented to the Greeks their gods, could already rely on myths, traditions, cults, mysteries, etc.; but to the Indian poets the Vedas were a much more solid foundation. The poetic works of both nations are, as anywhere else, only national poems since they are completely based upon the religious spirit and imaginations of that particular people. Though the Vedas are not yet accessible to us—which scholar or rather which government will some time make us this present?—the one who is interested in the religions of the various peoples need only look at the most valuable excerpts which Colebrooke has given us in order to realize—independent of the mentioned general acknowledgement and religious veneration of these books—that what is revealed in the *Bhagavad-Gita* in general and of the core of the Indian world-view is entirely grounded in the teachings of the Vedas. In these sacred books themselves we meet with the contradiction that oblations, prayers, works and other things of outward appearance are on the one hand prescribed as essential, and on the other hand it is Brahma and the pure direction towards him that is praised as the most sublime, even as the only truth. As to the Vedas, Krishna says partly that he himself is all the three Vedas (IX, 17), partly (even there) in the same breath that he is the concentrated monosyllable *Om* within them (also VII, 8), X, 35 too, that in the sacred hymns (no doubt the mantras, those parts of the Vedas which consist of hymns and prayers) he is the famous *gayatri* (von Schlegel in calling it *magnus hymnus* weakens the particular meaning of *gayatri* which Wilkins offers), the translation of which was given by Colebrooke (*Asiatic Researches* VIII, 400). The same contrast and contradiction appears everywhere where external cult and ceremonies are related to the consciousness of higher intensification. In another religion which has a ceremonial cult of sacrifices, etc. it says: Oblations and Fire offerings you dislike; a pure heart only you receive with pleasure. It is the same contrast which—under graver formalities

connected with a greater profundity of its true meaning—has occurred between belief and works. As an Indian poem the *Bhagavad-Gita* can at the same time contain the difference of inwardness and outwardness as contrast only, as the highest contradiction without reconciliation. This being the case makes the tediousness of the presentation even necessary; when the one aspect, works and action in general, has come to life, the other one, abstraction from all ritual performances and actual facts, enters the stage. But this onesidedness necessitates on the other hand the challenge to act, especially to the Kshatriya so that the presentation falls automatically, by its content, into these annoying repetitions.

Now in order to speak of the grade of perfection as the highest aim, we shall consider it firstly in its subjective form. This perfection is defined as the permanent state of renunciation, the subject matter of all preceding stages—perennial solitude of self-consciousness that has abandoned all sensations, all necessities of life and representations of external things, and is hence no longer consciousness—also not a fulfilled self-consciousness which would have spirit as its subject and still be consciousness; an intuition intuiting nothing, knowing of nothing—the pure emptiness of itself within itself. In modern terminology the definition of this state is to be called the absolute *immediacy* of knowing. For where there is knowledge of something, of some content, there is at once and already mediation; the knowing subject is knowing something only by means of this content which is its object, and the content is object only in as far as it is known. Consciousness, however, has contents only in as far as the content is its object, be it as feeling, intuiting or whatever; for feeling, intuiting, if it is not feeling of an animal, is feeling, intuiting of man, i.e., of a conscious being; these are simple, only analytical definitions which not to notice and to know even those who nowadays talk so much of direct knowledge are unconscious and ignorant enough.

Now this renouncing concentration is moksha, whose detailed qualities are given by Wilhelm von Humboldt on p. 39, being promised to the devotees and believers repeatedly almost on each single page of the poem, in general the merger with the godhead or literally, in the case of Krishna, the *becoming one* with Brahman, the *transformation into Brahman* (V, 24), Schlegel: *amounting to the extinction in the divine* (i.e., Brahman), Wilkins: *obtain the incorporeal Brahm*, and then: *Brahm is prepared, from the beginning, for such who are free from lust and anger, etc.* This unity with Brahman is also the liberation from metempsychosis.

This unity with Brahman leads at once to the last topic which is the ultimate in the context of Indian religion—the concept of Brahman, the summit of the meditative contemplation. What Brahman is can be easily understood and known, but it is much more difficult to understand how Brahman is related to this contemplation, and hence it is extremely interesting to reflect on this relation the result of which as we shall see, is the concept of Brahman itself or rather his being this concept.

When beginning to consider more in detail what might be the *affirmative* point or destination of the spirit which marks that self-contemplation, that self-isolation of self-consciousness, we realize that it is *thinking*. Meditation and other phrases, devotion, contemplation denote the *condition* of something, not the thing itself. That abstraction from all external and internal determinateness, all contents of sensation and of the spirit in their affirmative specific existence is objectless thinking. One must call it noble that the Indians have raised to this separation of the spiritual from the sensuous, the empirical manifold from the universal, of perceiving, desiring, imagining, willing, etc. from thinking, and that they have devoted themselves to the awareness of the supreme power of thinking. But the peculiar thing is that they did not proceed from the enormous abstraction of this extreme to the reconciliation with the particular, to the concrete; their spirit is thus only the unsteady reeling from one to another and finally the misery to realize moksha only as the annihilation of the individual, which is the same as nirvana in Buddhism.

If in order to name what is meant instead of the terms devotion, contemplation, etc. the term *thinking* had been used, we could object that when using the term thinking—even in its pure, abstract form—we still imagine that *something* is being thought, that we as thinking have *thoughts*, i.e., have them as internal objects. If we take *intuition* in the same indeterminateness, as entirely pure intuition, it amounts to the same abstract identity with itself; pure intuition does also not intuit something so that one cannot even call it intuition of *nothingness*, for it is objectless. But intuition essentially implies its being concrete; yet if thinking is also true only in so far as it is as such concrete, then its specific determinateness is that pure universality, the plain identity. The Yogi sitting there mentally and physically unmoved, staring at the tip of his nose, is that enforced arrested thought, strengthened to empty abstraction. Such a condition, however, is very strange and opposed to

us and would through our concept of thinking, which in our imagination is something very familiar to us, easily be explained.

But let us remember where it is said that this contemplation is in search of Brahman, that it is the *path*, the *direction* to Brahman and the *unification* with him, which may then be understood that it [contemplative meditation] has an object to be strived after. Yet it is, indeed, as we have seen in its own determinateness objectless, and striving after, direction and the like belong to a consciousness which has itself not reached contemplative meditation. In as much as this objectless thinking is at the same time essentially understood as a relation towards Brahman—yet as a *direct*, i.e., indeterminate relation—this *pure abstract thinking* is defined as *Brahman* himself—something subjective being identical with the one defined as objective, so that this contrast disappears and becomes a superficial expression without any substantial meaning.

It needs no further explanation that when using the terms subjective and objective and even more that of their unity, these inventions of thinking reflection of more recent times should not be ascribed to the Indians, just as little as when a reflection on mythology shows what the *concepts* of Zeus, Hera, Demeter, etc. actually are, these are not ascribed to the Greeks. One may well be right to say that they did not *have* this concept of Zeus. This notwithstanding, such a concept, if correctly defined, has been a content of their fanciful imagination of Zeus. The ignorance of this distinction—whether something has merely occupied the sensuous or fanciful consciousness or whether the same thing is known by reflective consciousness as thought or concept—is the source of many misunderstandings and of crude opposition. If Brahman has been characterized as that unity, it is this very unity against which the opposition to these abstract determinations is mainly directed. Indeed as abstract unity without any determinateness it is extremely deficient and fictitious; it is precisely this deficiency which constituted the nature of the Indian Brahman; he is unity as abstract universality only, as indeterminate substance. And if in the foregoing the determinateness of the subjective side showed that, while being the totally abstract thinking, thinking nothing, it has for that very reason no object, this becomes equally clear from the above mentioned determinateness that could be called the objective one, that is to say of the pure *universality* or pure substance, its being consisting in the abstraction from any specification and thus also from the specification of the object as against the subject.

Whether taking the subjective or the objective determinateness, we see that Brahman is the defective as being without the distinction of the subjective and objective. But the necessity and hence the power of the *distinction* is so important that it must also recur at this highest level.

We find this already in the use of the term *Brahma*. Von Humboldt as well as, more extensively, von Schlegel (*Indian Library* II, no. 4, p. 420, on the occasion of a discussion pretending to be scholarly, yet in fact leading to nothing or not aiming at any result), remind us once more of the distinction between *Brahma*, ending on a short *a*, the neuter, and the one ending on a long *a*, the masculine, and explain its precise meaning. It is nowadays and particularly among Bengal pandits customary, thus a habit of Indian scholars themselves, and therefore also in German, where the distinction between a short and a long *a* can hardly be expressed, to omit the final vowel of the neuter and to write *Brahm*. *Brahma* in the masculine gender, the Lord of creation according to the laconic information of the most ancient Indian lexicographer (*Indian Library* II, no. 4 p. 423), is individual, person and hence familiar to our European imagination. As to this I remark that a critical examination of this personality depends mostly on its essential substance. *Brahma* remains, in his essential determinateness, abstract Being, the universal, *substance without subjectivity* and is therefore not the *concrete*, not the spirit (just as little as God, the modern *Being* of beings, is thus determined as concrete, as spirit): With such a substance, which is actually nothing substantial at all, that masculine is, indeed, no individual subject, its personality being empty form, mere *personification*. In dealing with religions it is of utmost importance to distinguish the mere personification of God or a godhead which can be found in all mythologies from the personality which God is by his essential nature. This superficial personification removes also the objective independence of God or the godhead in relation to the subject. Thus we take Eros or [goddess] Pallas, in the beginning of the *Iliad*, when she prevents Achilles from drawing his sword, at once as the subjective feeling of love being the cause of Achilles's gaining selfpossession.

An explanatory example how *Brahma* appears personified even up to a trivial formality, yet at the same time how his distinction from the subject to which he is opposed is removed and how he is only represented as the subject's meditation, as neuter, is given right in the

introduction to the *Ramayana*. Valmiki (the author of the *Ramayana*, a twice-born), concentrating on the matter and aim of this poem, laments about one who was just slain in front of his hut, and his surviving mistress; he marvels at the metric rhythm of the words through which his lament finds expression, and his disciple, too, appreciates this meter. Thereupon Valmiki sits down on a stool in his hut and goes into contemplation. Then arrived in his hut the glorious Brahma (whether in the original Brahman or Brahma is used throughout the narration I cannot say, but this is in itself unimportant), the four-faced, the Lord of the three worlds. Valmiki, in contemplation, sees him, gets up, bows down hands folded, offers him a stool, water, milk, and rice—water so that he [Valmiki] might wash his [Brahma's] feet (normal offerings and marks of esteem towards a spiritual teacher); Brahma sits down on the offered stool and invites Valmiki also to take a stool. Valmiki sits down, his mind fixed on Brahma, goes into deep contemplation and sings a shloka (not in praise of Brahma, sitting in front of him, but) lamenting the crime, the just-mentioned murder—in the rhythmic meter of the former lament. Brahma now tells him in a more detailed manner that he should celebrate the deeds of Rama in this metric rhythm, after which he disappears. Valmiki and the disciple are utterly surprised; all the disciples proclaim, using this metric rhythm, that from the words the master had spoken to describe the crime this metric rhythm had originated. Hence Valmiki decides to compose the *Ramayana* in that meter. One sees that even despite this outer formality of appearing Brahma stays characterized as deep meditation.

But we must show these moments and their interrelation, which in what has been mentioned above have come to light by the very nature of things, with reference to their more distinct occurrence in the Indian presentation. Brahman's *metaphysical* characteristic is as known as it is simple and was already discussed: *pure Being*, pure universality, *supreme Being*, most sublime Being; yet what is most essential and interesting is that one sticks to this abstraction as against its concrete fulfillment—Brahman merely as pure Being, void of any concrete determinateness. When we Europeans call God the most supreme Being, this definition is equally abstract and insufficient, and reason-based metaphysics which denies our knowledge of God, i.e., to know God's qualities, demands that our conception of God be restricted to the same abstraction, knowing nothing of God than what is Brahman. Notwithstanding this critical

insight, the European conception will normally include that with the word supreme Being or even God we have the idea of something concrete, of spirit, and that what is thought is richer than what is said.

This prompts me to make a remark on von Schlegel's translation of Brahman (neuter gender) with *godhead*, whilst Krishna in contradistinction is called *graceful godhead*; von Humboldt uses the term *God* and remarks specially p. 21 that it follows clearly from many passages that Brahman and God are the same concepts. J.D. Guigniaut in his translation of Creuzer's *Symbolics* (vol. I, part II, notes, p. 618) pronounces himself very decidedly against von Schlegel's *method which in general consists in translating the sacred concepts of the religious philosophy of the Brahmins and many other theological and mythological expressions with corresponding Latin expressions, thus making disappear completely the original terms. This procedure removes and destroys the entire originality, all specific characteristics and the whole local coloring.* Von Schlegel remarks indeed (*Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 4, p. 422) that the word Brahman (neuter gender) corresponds exactly with the Greek *to theion*, to some extent also with the Latin *numen*, if only one would use this beautiful word in keeping with its true dignity. In all these verbal expressions and no less in *Deus* and *Gott*, God is talked of in an indeterminate way as in the case of the as such indeterminate, i.e., abstract Brahman; but the great difference is that those expressions are accompanied by a concrete imagination and are not meant in that indeterminateness which marks the essential substance of Brahman. It was noticed above that in translation it must be permitted—for formal necessity as well as for essential reasons—to use for a verbal expression in one language, that expresses something peculiar, in the other language the more general expression, or vice versa; but it is a different thing when each of the two verbal expressions has an original specific meaning, the more general only being that which is common to both. Here the use of the specific expression introduces to our imagination something as essential which should be kept aside and leaves out, on the other hand, something essential that should be specially emphasized. This variation which may become less important in the case of inferior characteristics and modifications causes confusion when happening in the case of the most general and most important fundamental definitions. *Deus*, *theos*, *Deva*, also other terms of the Indians, may or even must be translated with *God* when it is with reference to the vaguer conception. If, however,



the difference has come to the fore and if it is specifically meant to be intellectually conceived, we will be deceived if instead of something specific we will be offered that which is the specifically different. As has been mentioned in the first article, our priests, soldiers, etc. live in particular circumstances which are not there for Brahmins, Kshatriyas, etc., whereas these in turn show characteristics that belong to their essential nature. Thus one would certainly not translate Zeus, Jupiter, though this is the supreme father of the gods, with God or else the supreme Being. The objective definition of Brahman, this category of pure Being with which the Indian concept of *everything* extraordinary merges as the annihilation of all finite beings, marks the sublimity of Indian religion which, however, for that reason is not yet the beautiful or even less the actual truth. Pure Being is rather, because of its abstract character, a finite category only. Yet the Indians, just as little as the Eleatics, do not commit the inconsequence to distinguish nothingness as separated from being or to exclude it from being; von Humboldt observes this in 14, referring to IX, 19 where Krishna proclaims: I am immortality as well as death, *I am what is and what is not*. The same definition of Brahman as being *entity* and *non-entity* occurs also in many other passages.

This pure Being, because it is not extended to the definition of infinite subjectivity, shows Indian *pantheism* and at the same time *monotheism* in so far as pure Being is Oneness. Colebrooke's frequently quoted result of his knowledge of the Vedas (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. VIII) that ancient Indian religion acknowledges only *one God* yet does not distinguish sufficiently creature from creator, states indeed that originally the sun was taken to be the great soul (Mahanatma); but in as far as only such a monotheism is meant it stays or is rather in a purer form in Brahman. This monotheism is in an equally essential way pantheism; for if the One is also defined as *substance* or as the abstraction from the *universal* it is because of this abstraction *immediateness* and therefore, however, as the *Being of beings* immanent and identical with them, creature as not being distinguished from creator; but for that reason this immanent Being is not the concrete and empirical things and their finitude but rather the *being* of their existence only, the undefined identity. This it is what marks the imperfection of the category of substance, namely that it is left to the thinking subject in its outward appearance to make the distinction, to abstract in perception and apperception of the finite, individual things, from their finitude and individuality, and

to preserve substance, the *unitary* Being. Somewhere else (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 2nd ed., p. 519 ff. and Foreword, p. XIII ff.) I have criticized at some length that nowadays, especially among those theologians who do not know how to distinguish between reason and understanding, not even between substance and accident and rather in general convert the reasonable with their artificial language into absurdity, it is fashionable to convert pantheism into its very opposite when they assure us that through pantheism the infinite would be made into finite beings, the good into evil, etc., and hence also the finite, as remaining something *affirmative*, would be made the infinite, the evil, existing as such, would become the good. Hence they take pantheism to be a form of *polytheism* as if it would consider the individual things and their empirical finite existence as such to be godlike or even God. Such an opinion could only be ascribed to animals which have intuitions as well as imaginations of pictures yet, as not thinking, cannot proceed to general concepts; and among human beings only the inventors of such an assertion have that kind of imagination.

Of the difference of knowledge in this respect the Indians are well aware, it is referred to in lesson XVIII, shlokas 20–2, which von Humboldt mentions on p. 13. There it reads that true knowledge [*sat-tva*] means to see in *all* beings only the *one imperishable* principle, the *undivided* in the divisible. A second knowledge is to see various (specific) principles in all individual beings [knowledge as partaking of *rajas*], still limited universality like our natural forces, etc. The most disagreeable kind of knowledge, that of the third quality, of *darkness* [*tamas*], is the one which clings to one individual as if it were the whole without a universal principle. This absolute separateness of the individual beings the idea of present day pantheism cannot overcome, and as it is the most specific characteristic of pantheism that the individual beings and all finite qualities must be taken as not being independent of but rather as those which are only dissolved, *negated* in pure Being, this only proves actually the incapability of the people entertaining these false conceptions to free themselves from the belief in the independency, the absoluteness of the finite, being unable to comprehend what really is.

In the poem there are long tirades where Krishna states this universality with reference to his own being. Lesson VII: I am the taste of the waters, the radiance of sun and moon, the mystic word [*Om*] in the sacred books [*Vedas*], the sound in ether, the knowledge of the knowing, etc.

And further, lesson X: Among the Aditeyas I am *Vishnu*, among the stars I am the sun, etc., among the *Rudras* I am *Shiva*, etc. These tirades which initially sound sublime soon leave us unconcerned; initially they state that Krishna is the substance, the principle of all individual beings which, however, like taste, radiance, etc. is still in itself something limited. By the way, von Schlegel does not apply his previously mentioned manner of translating to the tirades; these passages are abundant in untranslated proper nouns; Shiva also does not bear the name *God of destruction, fate* or the like, and instead of Krishna it always reads *God of grace*. Those many particular general characteristics, however, are being absorbed by the One, Brahman, which is Krishna.

When Krishna says here that he is Shiva, Shiva retaliates in his proclamations, calling himself Krishna. In Upanishad IX, dedicated to Shiva, he talks in the same way of himself, sometimes with most daring versions of abstraction, thus invigorating the monotony of unity: What has been is Rudra (i.e., Shiva), and what is, is He, and what will be, is He; always I was, am and will be, forever. There is no second of whom I could say: I am that, and that is I. What is, am I, and what is *not*, am I. I am Brahma and I am Brahman. And furthermore in the same breath: I am the truth, I am the ox, etc., I am the supreme Being. Moreover there where intuition or imagination of other individual things, elements, etc. begins, it is stated for that reason as the ultimate that could be said of them that they are Brahman. In the Vedas it is said of Vac (speech) that it ascribes this quality [of being Brahman] to itself; and also: Ether, you are Brahman, the sun is Brahman, food, bread, etc. are Brahman.

An Englishman (Mill's *History of British India*, vol. I), who makes this compilation from the Vedas, arrives through this and others that will be mentioned later at the conclusion that Brahman, as well as *Oneness*, are to the Indians a vague predicate of praise, an insignificant title, as it were. The reason he gives is that the Indians had not arrived at the idea of the oneness of God; what is opposed to it is what he calls their incredible inconsistency in having developed the activity of the *one* God into the characters of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. This inconsistency is, it is true, a result of the fact that that oneness is not yet conceived of in its true quality, not as concrete as such, as spirit; that it is merely the category of the relations of substances. The thus inevitable inconsistency appears as the unsteady reeling, the subjective aspect of which we have mentioned above and which is equally inevitable with regard

to its objective aspect—as the flow from the One into the manifold of gods and the falling back from this abundance and splendor of fanciful imagination into the veil, dull oneness; a perennial change which at least bears that truth that those gods and in general the finite beings are no independent entities. The metaphysical quality which we have found is as such only one for the thinking subject, its content entirely being abstraction itself; hence it has as such no existence, for in the world it is only the finite beings that constitute its existence wherein, therefore, it does not exist as itself but as something else than its own being. But the Orientals have not reached the stage of insight to be satisfied with such an abstraction, pure Being, pure substance, even when they have defined it as thinking. The characteristic feature in this respect is the way in which Brahman as such is thought of, not as abstract thought of something else, but as existing *as such*. According to this definition Brahman is being said to be abstract self-consciousness, towards which the Yogi forces to concentrate and empty himself. As this meditative state of pure consciousness, pure Being has indeed a sort of existence which is as unspecified, i.e., abstract as it is in itself.

This meaning of contemplative meditation as well as of Brahman reveals itself already in the contemplative meditation of Valmiki which we have cited in the foregoing from *Ramayana*; yet there this meaning seems to be mixed with fancy imagination and personification. It is to be considered in its more unmixed forms. First of all devotion is a form of momentary state of mind which the Yogi aims to make a lasting one. The meaning of Indian devotion is most clearly depicted in the description of an Englishman who made every effort to thoroughly study Indian religiosity and explains it by means of interrogations and answers, suggesting to the Indian what to reply. When asking an Indian: Do you ritually worship the supreme Being (i.e., Brahman)? Do you pray to Him? Do you honor Him with offerings? he would immediately reply: "No, never!" If this is so, then you worship Him spiritually, which is the purest and at the same time the most practicable form of worship because it affords only a few or no ceremonies? "No." Do you praise Him? "No." Do you reflect on His qualities and perfection? "No" (we have seen above that devotion is completely empty). What then is that so much praised quiet meditation? His answer will be: "When in some divine service I sit there with crossed legs, elevated folded hands, eyes closed, mind, thought, tongue and lips being at rest, then I speak to

myself with my inner voice: *I am Brahman*. Due to Maya we have not the awareness of being Brahman. It is forbidden to adore the supreme Being, to praise Him with prayers and oblations, for this would be a worship directed to ourselves; we may venerate and adore emanations of His." Of Brahma tradition has it that in former times he has had temples, that these too have been destroyed (see Creuzer, *Symbolics*, I, 575, and Guigniaut I, 241); so much less has Brahman temples. In a similar way in our days, as we have read in public reports, the artist Canova who has decided to donate his property towards construction of a church in his hometown Possagno, was not granted permission by the ecclesiastic authorities to dedicate it to God.

The disappearance of the objectivity of Brahman is directly comprised in what we have quoted over and above, given on every page of the poem as the aim of contemplative meditation, namely the unification with Brahman, to become Brahman, deification or rather Brahmification. I refrain from citing passages regarding this unification, of which there are innumerable instances. But it is of greater interest to reflect on the definitions of Brahman by the aforementioned most ancient Indian lexicographer and which von Schlegel introduces to us (*Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 4, p. 423). Besides the definition as pure Being, he mentions two other meanings, namely 1. the Vedas (this is even prior to pure Being) and 2. religious worship. That these are only seemingly different meanings of essentially merely outwardly different forms of the same substance is nowhere more obvious than in the case of this absolute Oneness itself, Brahman. The purport of the interrelation of these definitions follows already from all we have said; Brahma is the Vedas and the sacrificial rites, not only as being the Being as such of all beings; it is rather the Vedas as chanted by Brahmins, and the sacrifices offered by them are contemplative meditation, the devotion, which is Brahman. It is the same what Krishna, i.e., as we have seen nothing but Brahman, says in IX, 16: I am the sacrifice, I am the worship, I am the sprinkled water and I am the herb-  
age; I am the [sacred] hymn (*Carmen*, Wilkins: *The ceremonies to the manes of the ancestors*); I am also the sacred oil, I am the fire, I the ignited incense (Wilkins: *the victim*). By Brahman's being himself the entire sacrifice and the various offerings, he through himself is being offered and sacrificed to himself; he is, as devotion, the abstract pure self-awareness and as sacrifice just this sensually mediated self-relation. And so the all-pervading Brahman, as we read in III, 15, is always *present* in sacrifice, a more precise

form of presence than in the common pantheistic understanding which also there, in its vague presentation, cannot be misunderstood. In this passage a circular process is described which at first sight makes superficial sense only, namely that from sacrifice comes rain and that through rain food is procured, and hence the preservation of all animate creatures; sacrifice, however, is performed in actions of religious worship, and this derives from Brahman who, as we read, has sprung from the uniform and indivisible (*God has arisen from the uniform and indivisible*). Here Brahman (the neuter) is distinguished from the uniform one (*the great One*). But particular attention must be paid to the effect of sacrifice; fertility of the earth must not be understood as an effect of sacrifice, brought about through divine consideration of the sacrifice-supported prayers of the mortals. The interrelation of sacrifice and bringing forth or creation is, as follows from the above said, more direct; from death comes life, this is the more abstract statement. In one of the passages cited by Colebrooke in the excerpts from the Vedas (*Asiatic Researches*, VIII, 404 ff.) this interrelation is presented in a most admirable way; as originators of the prayers used in sacrifices for the dead Prajapati and his son Yajna are named, the former the original soul, Brahman, the latter name seems, as Colebrooke remarks, to refer to the allegoric sacrifice of Brahma (Guigniaut, l.c., p. 602: *the sacrifice or the self-sacrifice*). Yet this sacrifice has the following quality: The creative power of the prime distinct matter is that of *contemplation*; there was first produced *longing* in its thought (the originally productive seed) which the enlightened ones, getting to know it as dwelling in their hearts through reason, recognize as the *connection of being in non-being*, then follows a further, utterly abstruse description which makes us understand at least that much, namely that the first that happens is the universal sacrifice to which creation is directly linked up or rather which itself appears as creation of the universe.

I add another passage which Colebrooke (*ibid.*, p. 475 ff.) cites from the first Upanishad of the 4th Veda, which also seems to express the origin of the One from itself and hence the return to itself, as well as at the same time through this the origin of the universe; it says: through *contemplation arises* the all-encompassing *One*; this produces food (material beings) and, one after the other, breath, thought, real worlds and immortality, deriving from action. The omniscient is *profound contemplation*; his self-knowing is his substance, out of which derives the *encompassing One*, as well as names, forms, and food; and this is the *truth*.

Abstraction leading to contemplative meditation is in itself the momentum of negation, of sacrifice, and one cannot ignore another profound thought: that to this negativity or infinitude there is directly related the productive activity (as in Jakob Bohme to *pain, torment* and *spring*). In the numerous theogonies or cosmogonies which we already got to know, there are innumerable forms, names, personifications by which from that profound meditation, from the self-centered isolation of Brahman there arise different interpretations of creation and creator. These multiple presentations seem to have nothing in common apart from the common foundations of the ideas mentioned. In the same way and in order to comprehend and define the Supreme, Indian mythology or philosophy roams about with many forms of the great One, the universal soul, etc. that can hardly really be distinguished from Brahman.

Likewise Brahma (masculine) only occurs as one of the many concepts and personifications of the subjectivized Brahman. Here, where outer appearance (*maya*) begins, the multiplicity of the personifications becomes growingly more numerous and more arbitrary. Brahma occurs mainly in relation to Vishnu or Krishna and to Shiva in a more distinct form and as *one* of the figures of Trimurti, the Indian trinity; a *definition* of the Supreme which to find in the Indian world-view has necessarily attracted the interest of the Europeans. As crude as the realization of this idea here may be, destroying the concept of *spirit*, expected to derive from it, so much it contains at least the abstract form (like the Pythagorean and Platonic *trias*) for a concrete definition of spirit; and it is the more sophisticated form which proves that, when the idea of the spirit is elevated in thought to a concept, it is to be conceived of as three in one. But it would go too far to explain how the rudiment of the triad which, for the first time, in Christianity has advanced to the true idea of God, in Indian world-view has merely developed into something preposterous. For our purpose, however, namely to define the concept of Brahma, his relation to Vishnu is highly characteristic and the function assigned to him in his worldly appearances. I think of the description which Creuzer, *Symbolics*, part I, p. 626 (Guigniaut, vol. I, ch. 4) gives, relying on Polier. It shows Brahma how he, besides his share to the world which was allotted to him, as to Vishnu and Shiva, wants to claim another share for himself, and in spite of being punished by them for this theft, nevertheless and being proud to have revealed the Vedas considered himself as superior to both the others. As punishment for this

arrogance and also because of his indecent behavior he is condemned to undergo a course of penances in the shape of four incarnations: he takes shape in worldly existence as a crow, a Chandala, a treacherous murderer, etc.; after rigid exercises of penance, where years and centuries are not used sparingly, he returns to being Brahma. Among the exercises of penance, to which he is condemned, is the one to adore Vishnu and to write the history of Vishnu's incarnations. In the second existence, having turned from being Chandala and robber into a sage, he takes all by surprise through his knowledge and interpretation of the Vedas; he humbly confesses that he is the incarnation of Brahma, condemned to do penance for his arrogance; he then becomes an inspired bard of glorifications, praises the incarnations of Vishnu, composes *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*; Rama, the hero of this poem, is an incarnation of Vishnu, and Arjuna, hero of the former, with whom Krishna is engaged in dialogue (*Bhagavad-Gita*), is Krishna himself (lesson X, 37). Creuzer, l.c., p. 634, draws our attention to the difference that Vishnu's appearances in the world are called incarnations, whereas Brahma's return to himself takes place by way of penance, *self-regenerations*. There is yet another characteristic difference. Those appearances of Krishna are such of a directly blissful one, living for love, performer of great deeds, a powerful one; the glory that Brahma attains in his four worldly forms, by means of his penances, is the one of a wise bard, and his deeds are the famous national epics. His basic characteristic remains therefore contemplation, the existence of the One as abstract return to himself; but in as much as meditation takes the shape of self-conscious action, it is the one of a cultured sage, a poem. It [meditation] reaches this stage by means of the exercises, through the ascension from the lowest state and character via these exercises of penance to perfection. Brahma as Valmiki, author of the *Ramayana*, is described as a Chandala by caste; and so is Chaldas (l.c., p. 633), the re-discoverer and collector of Valmiki's poetic works; the fourth and last worldly form of Brahma is that as born to poor parents, without education and culture, and when he appears as a Brahmin in the palace where he is known, he does so in order to stay unknown, as this is not his caste.

Of the Brahmins, however, it is said in the foregoing that they are by birth the twice-born and that they, for that reason, possess the privileged rank to which the Yogi and the poet elevate themselves; in them Brahma is not troubled to pass through the meditations of the



exercises of penance. Also in our poem one cannot misunderstand this comparison (VIII, 11), where the way of contemplative meditation is as usual described as the restraint of all senses, etc., the pronouncing of the one syllable *Om*, and it is mentioned as that exercised by those who know the Vedas and those who are dedicated to Yoga. Those are the Brahmins. When we use the terms of Schlegel's translation in their precise meaning, to which we are particularly entitled, we find there too the above mentioned definition of the subjectivity of Brahman. But of the Brahmins we read that they call contemplative meditation the simple or rather individual, by which is meant Brahman as the uniform, contemplative meditation itself, as the essence of the subjective element.

That to the Brahmin is attributed the power over nature has been mentioned above. The also cited most ancient Indian lexicon (*Indian Library*, vol. II, no. 4, p. 423) mentions as the first meaning of Brahman (masculine): born as a priest; as the second: Lord of creation; one sees that both are one and the same definition. Brahman, thus Guignaut I, p. 241 sums up the relationship, exists in the Brahmins; they are adored in his stead since he dwells within them. Even more distinct: he himself is being adored when adoring them, they are his existence; he is them as self-conscious existence; they are his permanent incarnation. When a Brahmin is born, so it says in the Laws of Manu, he is born as superior to the worlds, the master of all creatures; this is literally the same as what is stated in the ancient Indian lexicon. Brahmins have sprung from the mouth of Brahman: the mouth is on the one hand speaking—in the foregoing *vac*, speech, has been mentioned, the Vedas and the recitation of the same; on the other hand the mouth is eating; it is the Brahmin who presents the offerings; both are his only duties and occupations. About the above mentioned purpose of the offering in relation to the Brahmins the Laws of Manu say the following: for the preservation of the worlds the Brahmin offers the melted butter to the gods and the rice cakes to the genitors of the human race. More in detail it is expressed there that through the mouth of the Brahmin the heavenly gods are permanently fed with melted butter (*feast on clarified butter*) and the manes of the ancestors with sacred cakes. The consumption of the oblations by the Brahmins is feeding and nourishing the gods and hence their and the worlds' creation and preservation.

As to the Brahmin's contemplations on the rising sun, *Asiatic Researches* V, p. 349 (they are prescribed for all times and actions of a

day), he says to himself: The mysterious light (of which he also says that it is the earth and the threefold world, etc.) which dwells within me, being inwardly within my heart, is identical with that radiating power. I am a radiant revelation of the supreme Brahman. The Indian sees in the Brahmin the presence of god, as the Tibetan, Mongol, etc. in the Dalai Lama; as the sect of the Ganapatyas (cf. Colebrooke, *Asiatic Researches*, VII, p. 279 ff.) at Chinver, close to Pune, adore Ganesha (the god with an elephant head) in an individual whose family is privileged with the inherited incarnation of this god. As an Englishman puts it: An Indian is inclined to fall down in front of a Brahmin, saying to him: Brahmin, you are my god. Fitz-Clarence, the adjutant of the Governor General Marquis of Hastings, says in the description of his journey that a Brahmin, holding an inferior position in the English East-India Government, still maintains this high esteem. He cites the example that a Brahmin as a messenger with information arrived at the Government Offices in dirty clothes; Indians, who walked the same way and discovered under his dusty clothes the thread round his neck (the distinctive mark of a Brahmin) fell down and kissed the footmarks of his dirty shoes.

This is the way I understood the interrelation of the discussed principles of the Indian spirit, based upon the scholarly investigations of the author and by comparison with other materials. The more the profound and critical diligence of the European scholars has provided us access to the Indian mind in its peculiar light, the more do the details of theogonies and cosmogonies and of other myths lose their importance, for it becomes already obvious that the caprice of fancy imagination, being connected to the versatility of a subtle reflection, has expanded such material to a wild and inexpressible variety. Thus one is automatically taken to a thorough investigation into the basic lines of what is common, the principles of the Indian world-view. But the more those riches present themselves to us in their original color, the more we must abandon the superficial ideas of Indian religiosity and its contents, that originated partly from an application of first best categories of our culture, partly from a European philosophy which itself was often in a state of disorder. They must give way to the steadily growing documentation of the peculiarities of the Indian spirit. But the task of the reception becomes at once all the more difficult not so much because of a thorough difference of the Indian imagination from ours, but rather

because it interferes with the most sublime concepts of our consciousness, but in the state of that wonderful profundity abruptly takes a rapid fall down to the most profane. The highly esteemed author who in so many of the most difficult investigations, often undertaken with little or no support by previous research, has enlightened us for the first time, has spared no troubles to collect and construct, from the diffuse presentation of the poem under consideration, its foundation-stones. Thanks to him we are now in a position to interrelate the scattered material and to investigate it more thoroughly.

We should also have dealt with the second lecture (cf. p. 45 till end) which, as the first was engaged with the substance of the system, now considers its presentation, its arrangement as well as its relation to poetic and philosophic form. However, this article is already lengthy enough, and one would *eo ipso* expect that scholarship and taste have offered the author interesting reflections and especially profound comparisons with the merger of poetry and philosophy in ancient Greece, in as much as the author's refined critical tactfulness has made us realize a disparity between the first eleven and the last seven hymns of the poem. The unpleasant discovery that in astronomic and genealogical works interpolations are something usual, disclosed to the scholars who had hoped to draw from this at least reliable chronological and genealogical data a new field of difficulties and uncertainty. The somewhat cento-like structure of our poem does not essentially affect its substance; it only adds to the already sufficient tediousness of the Indian verbosity and repetitions.

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## Philosophy of World History\*

India, like China, is a phenomenon antique as well as modern; one which has remained stationary and fixed, and has received a most perfect home-sprung development. It has always been the land of imaginative aspiration, and appears to us still as a Fairy region, an enchanted World. In contrast with the Chinese State, which presents only the most prosaic Understanding, India is the region of fantasy and sensibility. The point of advance in principle which it exhibits to us may be generally stated as follows: In China the patriarchal principle rules a people in a condition of nonage, the part of whose moral resolution is occupied by the regulating law, and the moral oversight of the Emperor. Now it is the interest of Spirit that external conditions should become internal ones; that the natural and the spiritual world should be recognized in the subjective aspect belonging to intelligence; by which process the unity of subjectivity and [positive] Being generally—or the Idealism of Existence—is established. This Idealism, then, is found in India, but only as an Idealism of imagination, without distinct conceptions; one which does indeed free existence from Beginning and Matter [liberates it from temporal limitations and gross materiality], but changes everything into the merely Imaginative;

\* From *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree [1857] (New York: Colonial Press, 1900), "Oriental World", pp. 139–67.

for although the latter appears interwoven with definite conceptions and Thought presents itself as an occasional concomitant, this happens only through accidental combination. Since, however, it is the abstract and absolute Thought itself that enters into these dreams as their material, we may say that Absolute Being is presented here as in the ecstatic state of a dreaming condition. For we have not the dreaming of an actual Individual, possessing distinct personality, and simply unfettering the latter from limitation, but we have the dreaming of the unlimited absolute Spirit.

There is a beauty of a peculiar kind in women, in which their countenance presents a transparency of skin, a light and lovely roseate hue, which is unlike the complexion of mere health and vital vigor—a more refined bloom, breathed, as it were, by the soul within—and in which the features, the light of the eye, the position of the mouth, appear soft, yielding, and relaxed. This almost unearthly beauty is perceived in women in those days which immediately succeed child-birth; when freedom from the burden of pregnancy and the pains of travail is added to the joy of soul that welcomes the gift of a beloved infant. A similar tone of beauty is seen also in women during the magical somnambulant sleep, connecting them with a world of superterrestrial beauty. A great artist (Schoreel) has moreover given this tone to the dying Mary, whose spirit is already rising to the regions of the blessed, but once more, as it were, lights up her dying countenance for a farewell kiss. Such a beauty we find also in its loveliest form in the Indian World; a beauty of enervation in which all that is rough, rigid, and contradictory is dissolved, and we have only the soul in a state of emotion—a soul, however, in which the death of free self-reliant Spirit is perceptible. For should we approach the charm of this Flower-life—a charm rich in imagination and genius—in which its whole environment and all its relations are permeated by the rose-breath of the Soul, and the World is transformed into a Garden of Love—should we look at it more closely, and examine it in the light of Human Dignity and Freedom—the more attractive the first sight of it had been, so much the more unworthy shall we ultimately find it in every respect.

The character of Spirit in a state of Dream, as the generic principle of the Hindu Nature, must be further defined. In a dream, the individual ceases to be conscious of self or such, in contradistinction from objective existences. When awake, I exist for myself, and the rest of creation is an external, fixed objectivity, as I myself am for it. As external, the rest of existence expands itself to a rationally connected whole; a system of

relations, in which my individual being is itself a member—an individual being united with that totality. This is the sphere of Understanding. In the state of dreaming, on the contrary, this separation is suspended. Spirit has ceased to exist for itself in contrast with alien existence, and thus the separation of the external and individual dissolves before its universality—its essence. The dreaming Indian is therefore all that we call finite and individual; and, at the same time—as infinitely universal and unlimited—a something intrinsically divine. The Indian view of things is a Universal Pantheism, a Pantheism, however, of Imagination, not of Thought. One substance pervades the Whole of things, and all individualizations are directly vitalized and animated into particular Powers. The sensuous matter and content are in each case simply and in the rough taken up, and carried over into the sphere of the Universal and Immeasurable. It is not liberated by the free power of Spirit into a beautiful form, and idealized in the Spirit, so that the sensuous might be a merely subservient and compliant expression of the spiritual; but [the sensuous object itself] is expanded into the immeasurable and undefined, and the Divine is thereby made bizarre, confused, and ridiculous. These dreams are not mere fables—a play of the imagination, in which the soul only reveled in fantastic gambols: it is lost in them; hurried to and fro by these reveries, as by something that exists really and seriously for it. It is delivered over to these limited objects as to its Lords and Gods. Everything, therefore—Sun, Moon, Stars, the Ganges, the Indus, Beasts, Flowers—everything is a God to it. And while, in this deification, the finite loses its consistency and substantiality, intelligent conception of it is impossible. Conversely the Divine, regarded as essentially changeable and unfixed, is also by the base form which it assumes, defiled and made absurd. In this universal deification of all finite existence, and consequent degradation of the Divine, the idea of Theanthropy, the incarnation of God, is not a particularly important conception. The parrot, the cow, the ape, etc., are likewise incarnations of God, yet are not therefore elevated above their nature. The Divine is not individualized to a subject, to concrete Spirit, but degraded to vulgarity and senselessness. This gives us a general idea of the Indian view of the Universe. Things are as much stripped of rationality, of finite consistent stability of cause and effect, as man is of the steadfastness of free individuality, of personality, and freedom.

Externally, India sustains manifold relations to the History of the World. In recent times the discovery has been made, that Sanskrit

lies at the foundation of all those further developments which form the languages of Europe; e.g., Greek, Latin, German. India, moreover, was the center of emigration for all the western world; but this external historical relation is to be regarded rather as a merely physical diffusion of peoples from this point. Although in India the elements of further developments might be discovered, and although we could find traces of their being transmitted to the West, this transmission has been nevertheless so abstract [so superficial], that that which among later peoples attracts our interest, is not anything derived from India, but rather something concrete, which they themselves have formed, and in regard to which they have done their best to forget Indian elements of culture. The spread of Indian culture is pre-historical, for History is limited to that which makes an essential epoch in the development of Spirit. On the whole, the diffusion of Indian culture is only a dumb, deedless expansion; that is, it presents no political action. The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves. And as in this silent way, Northern India has been a center of emigration, productive of merely physical diffusion, India as a Land of Desire forms an essential element in General History. From the most ancient times downwards, all nations have directed their wishes and longings to gaining access to the treasures of this land of marvels, the most costly which the Earth presents; treasures of Nature—pearls, diamonds, perfumes, rose-essences, elephants, lions, etc.—as also treasures of wisdom. The way by which these treasures have passed to the West, has at all times been a matter of World-historical importance, bound up with the fate of nations. Those wishes have been realized; this Land of Desire has been attained; there is scarcely any great nation of the East, nor of the Modern European West, that has not gained for itself a smaller or larger portion of it. In the old world, Alexander the Great was the first to penetrate by land to India, but even he only just touched it. The Europeans of the modern world have been able to enter into direct connection with this land of marvels only circuitously from the other side; and by way of the sea, which, as has been said, is the general uniter of countries. The English, or rather the East India Company, are the lords of the land; for it is the necessary fate of Asiatic Empires to be subjected to Europeans; and China will, some day or other, be obliged to submit to this fate. The number of inhabitants is near 200,000,000, of whom from 100,000,000 to 112,000,000 are directly subject to the English. The Princes who are

not immediately subject to them have English Agents at their Courts, and English troops in their pay. Since the country of the Mahrattas (Marathas) was conquered by the English, no part of India has asserted its independence of their sway. They have already gained a footing in the Burman Empire, and passed the Brahmaputra, which bounds India on the east. India Proper is the country which the English divide into two large sections: the Deccan—the great peninsula which has the Bay of Bengal on the east, and the Indian Sea on the west—and Hindustan, formed by the valley of the Ganges, and extending in the direction of Persia. To the northeast, Hindustan is bordered by the Himalaya, which has been ascertained by Europeans to be the highest mountain range in the world, for its summits are about 26,000 feet above the level of the sea. On the other side of the mountains the level again declines; the dominion of the Chinese extends to that point, and when the English wished to go to Lhasa to the Dalai-Lama, they were prevented by the Chinese. Towards the west of India flows the Indus, in which the five rivers are united, which are called the Punjab, into which Alexander the Great penetrated. The dominion of the English does not extend to the Indus; the sect of the Sikhs inhabits that district, whose constitution is thoroughly democratic, and who have broken off from the Indian as well as from the Mohammedan religion, and occupy an intermediate ground—acknowledging only one Supreme Being. They are a powerful nation, and have reduced to subjection Kabul and Kashmir. Besides these there dwell along the Indus genuine Indian tribes of the Warrior-Caste. Between the Indus and its twin-brother, the Ganges, are great plains. The Ganges, on the other hand, forms large Kingdoms around it, in which the sciences have been so highly developed, that the countries around the Ganges enjoy a still greater reputation than those around the Indus. The Kingdom of Bengal is especially flourishing. The Narmada forms the boundary between the Deccan and Hindustan. The peninsula of the Deccan presents a far greater variety than Hindustan, and its rivers possess almost as great a sanctity as the Indus and the Ganges—which latter has become a general name for all the rivers in India, as the River *kat' exochen*. We call the inhabitants of the great country which we have now to consider Indians, from the river Indus (the English call them Hindus). They themselves have never given a name to the whole, for it has never become one Empire, and yet we consider it as such.



With regard to the *political* life of the Indians, we must first consider the advance it presents in contrast with China. In China there prevailed an equality among all the individuals composing the empire; consequently all government was absorbed in its center, the Emperor; so that individual members could not attain to independence and subjective freedom. The next degree in advance of this Unity is Difference, maintaining its independence against the all-subduing power of Unity. An organic life requires in the first place One Soul, and in the second place, a divergence into differences, which become organic members, and in their several offices develop themselves to a complete system; in such a way, however, that their activity reconstitutes that one soul. This freedom of separation is wanting in China. The deficiency is that diversities cannot attain to independent existence. In this respect, the essential advance is made in India, viz. that independent members ramify from the unity of despotic power. Yet the distinctions which these imply are referred to Nature. Instead of stimulating the activity of a soul as their center of union, and spontaneously realizing that soul—as is the case in organic life—they petrify and become rigid, and by their stereotyped character condemn the Indian people to the most degrading spiritual serfdom. The distinctions in question are the *Castes*. In every rational State there are distinctions which must manifest themselves. Individuals must arrive at subjective freedom, and in doing so, give an objective form to these diversities. But Indian culture has not attained to a recognition of freedom and inward morality; the distinctions which prevail are only those of occupations, and civil conditions. In a free state also, such diversities give rise to particular classes, so combined, however, that their members can maintain their individuality. In India we have only a division in masses—a division, however, that influences the whole political life and the religious consciousness. The distinctions of class, like that [rigid] Unity in China, remain consequently on the same original grade of *substantiality*, i.e., they are not the result of the free subjectivity of individuals. Examining the idea of a State and its various functions, we recognize the first essential function as that whose scope is the absolutely Universal; of which man becomes conscious first in Religion, then in Science. God, the Divine [*to Theion*] is the absolutely Universal. The highest class therefore will be the one by which the Divine is presented and brought to bear on the community—the class of Brahmins. The second element or class will represent subjective

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power and valor. Such power must assert itself, in order that the whole may stand its ground, and retain its integrity against other such totalities or states. This class is that of the Warriors and Governors—the Kshatriyas; although Brahmins often become governors. The third order of occupation recognized is that which is concerned with the specialties of life—the satisfying of its necessities—and comprehends agriculture, crafts and trade; the class of the Vaishyas. Lastly, the fourth element is the class of service, the mere instrument for the comfort of others, whose business it is to work for others for wages affording a scanty subsistence—the caste of Shudras. This servile class—properly speaking—constitutes no special organic class in the state, because its members only serve individuals: their occupations are therefore dispersed among them and are consequently attached to that of the previously mentioned castes. Against the existence of “classes” generally, an objection has been brought—especially in modern times—drawn from the consideration of the State in its “aspect” of abstract equity. But equality in civil life is something absolutely impossible; for individual distinctions of sex and age will always assert themselves; and even if an equal share in the government is accorded to all citizens, women and children are immediately passed by, and remain excluded. The distinction between poverty and riches, the influence of skill and talent, can be as little ignored—utterly refuting those abstract assertions. But while this principle leads us to put up with variety of occupations, and distinction of the classes to which they are entrusted, we are met here in India by the peculiar circumstance that the individual belongs to such a class essentially by birth, and is bound to it for life. All the concrete vitality that makes its appearance sinks back into death. A chain binds down the life that was just upon the point of breaking forth. The promise of freedom which these distinctions hold out is therewith completely nullified. What birth has separated mere arbitrary choice has no right to join together again: therefore, the castes preserving distinctness from their very origin, are presumed not to be mixed or united by marriage. Yet even Arrian (*Ind.* 11) reckoned seven castes, and in later times more than thirty have been made out; which, notwithstanding all obstacles, have arisen from the union of the various classes. Polygamy necessarily tends to this. A Brahmin, e.g., is allowed three wives from the three other castes, provided he has first taken one from his own. The offspring of such mixtures originally belonged to no caste, but one of the kings

invented a method of classifying these casteless persons, which involved also the commencement of arts and manufactures. The children in question were assigned to particular employments; one section became weavers, another wrought in iron, and thus different classes arose from these different occupations. The highest of these mixed castes consists of those who are born from the marriage of a Brahmin with a wife of the Warrior caste; the lowest is that of the Chandalas, who have to remove corpses, to execute criminals, and to perform impure offices generally. The members of this caste are excommunicated and detested; and are obliged to live separate and far from association with others. The Chandalas are obliged to move out of the way for their superiors, and a Brahmin may knock down any that neglect to do so. If a Chandala drinks out of a pond it is defiled, and requires to be consecrated afresh.

We must next consider the relative position of these castes. Their origin is referred to a myth, which tells us that the Brahmin caste proceeded from Brahma's mouth; the Warrior caste from his arms; the industrial classes from his loins; the servile caste from his foot. Many historians have set up the hypothesis that the Brahmins originally formed a separate sacerdotal nation, and this fable is especially countenanced by the Brahmins themselves. A people consisting of priests alone is, assuredly, the greatest absurdity, for we know *a priori*, that a distinction of classes can exist only within a people; in every nation the various occupations of life must present themselves, for they belong to the objectivity of Spirit. One class necessarily supposes another, and the rise of castes generally, is only a result of the united life of a nation. A nation of priests cannot exist without agriculturists and soldiers. Classes cannot be brought together from without; they are developed only from within. They come forth from the interior of national life, and not conversely. But that these distinctions are here attributed to Nature, is a necessary result of the Idea which the East embodies. For while the individual ought properly to be empowered to choose his occupation, in the East, on the contrary, internal subjectivity is not yet recognized as independent; and if distinction obtrude themselves, their recognition is accompanied by the belief that the individual does not choose his particular position for himself, but receives it from Nature. In China the people are dependent—without distinction of classes—on the laws and moral decision of the Emperor; consequently on a human will. Plato, in his Republic, assigns the arrangement in different classes with a view to various occupations, to the choice of the governing body. Here,

therefore, a moral, a spiritual power is the arbiter. In India, Nature is this governing power. But this natural destiny need not have led to that degree of degradation which we observe here, if the distinctions had been limited to occupation with what is earthly—to forms of objective Spirit. In the feudalism of mediaeval times, individuals were also confined to a certain station in life; but for all there was a Higher Being, superior to the most exalted earthly dignity, and admission to holy orders was open to all. This is the grand distinction, that here Religion holds the same position towards all; that, although the son of a mechanic becomes a mechanic, the son of a peasant a peasant, and free choice is often limited by many restrictive circumstances, the religious element stands in the same relation to all, and all are invested with an absolute value by religion. In India the direct contrary is the case. Another distinction between the classes of society as they exist in the Christian world and those in Hindustan is the moral dignity which exists among us in every class, constituting that which man must possess in and through himself. In this respect the higher classes are equal to the lower; and while religion is the higher sphere in which all sun themselves, equality before the law—rights of person and of property—are gained for every class. But by the fact that in India, as already observed, differences extend not only to the objectivity of Spirit, but also to its absolute subjectivity, and thus exhaust all its relations—neither morality, nor justice, nor religiosity is to be found.

Every caste has its especial duties and rights. Duties and rights, therefore, are not recognized as pertaining to mankind generally, but as those of a particular caste. While we say, "Bravery is a virtue," the Hindus say, on the contrary, "Bravery is the virtue of the Kshatriyas." Humanity generally, human duty and human feeling do not manifest themselves; we find only duties assigned to the several castes. Everything is petrified into these distinctions, and over this petrification a capricious destiny holds sway. Morality and human dignity are unknown; evil passions have their full swing; the Spirit wanders into the Dream-World, and the highest state is Annihilation.

To gain a more accurate idea of what the Brahmins are, and in what the Brahminical dignity consists, we must investigate the Hindu religion and the conceptions it involves, to which we shall have to return further on; for the respective rights of castes have their basis in a religious relation. Brahma (neuter) is the Supreme in Religion, but there are besides chief divinities Brahma (masc.) Vishnu or Krishna—incarnate

in infinitely diverse forms—and Shiva. These form a connected Trinity. Brahma is the highest; but Vishnu or Krishna, Shiva, the Sun moreover, the Air, etc., are also Brahm, i.e., Substantial Unity. To Brahm itself no sacrifices are offered; it is not honored; but prayers are presented to all other idols. Brahm itself is the Substantial Unity of All. The highest religious position of man, therefore is, being exalted to Brahm. If a Brahmin is asked what Brahm is, he answers: When I fall back within myself, and close all external senses, and say “Om” to myself, that is Brahm. Abstract unity with God is realized in this abstraction from humanity. An abstraction of this kind may in some cases leave everything else unchanged, as does devotional feeling, momentarily excited. But among the Hindus it holds a negative position towards all that is concrete; and the highest state is supposed to be this exaltation, by which the Hindu raises himself to deity. The Brahmins, in virtue of their birth, are already in possession of the Divine. The distinction of castes involves, therefore, a distinction between present deities and mere limited mortals. The other castes may likewise become partakers in a Regeneration; but they must subject themselves to immense self-denial, torture, and penance. Contempt of life, and of living humanity, is the chief feature in this asceticism. A large number of the non-Brahminical population strive to attain Regeneration. They are called Yogis.<sup>1</sup> Thus

<sup>1</sup> An Englishman who, on a journey to Tibet to visit the Dalai-Lama, met such a Yogi, gives the following account: The Yogi was already on the second grade in his ascent to Brahminical dignity. He had passed the first grade by remaining for twelve years on his legs, without ever sitting or lying down. At first he had bound himself fast to a tree with a rope, until he had accustomed himself to sleep standing. The second grade required him to keep his hands clasped together over his head for twelve years in succession. Already his nails had almost grown into his hands. The third grade is not always passed through in the same way; generally the Yogi has to spend a day between five fires, that is, between four fires occupying the four quarters of heaven, and the Sun. He must then swing backwards and forwards over the fire, a ceremony occupying three hours and three-quarters. Englishmen present at an act of this kind, say that in half an hour the blood streamed forth from every part of the devotee's body; he was taken down and presently died. If this trial is also surmounted, the aspirant is finally buried alive, that is put into the ground in an upright position and quite covered over with soil; after three hours and three-quarters he is drawn out, and if he lives, he is supposed to have at last attained the spiritual power of a Brahmin.

only by such negation of his existence does anyone attain Brahminical power. In its highest degree this negation consists in a sort of hazy consciousness of having attained perfect mental immobility—the annihilation of all emotion and all volition;—a condition which is regarded as the highest among the Buddhists also. However pusillanimous and effeminate the Hindus may be in other respects, it is evident how little they hesitate to sacrifice themselves to the Highest—to Annihilation.<sup>2</sup> Infanticide is also very common in India. Mothers throw their children into the Ganges, or let them pine away under the rays of the sun. The morality which is involved in respect for human life is not found among the Hindus. There are besides those already mentioned, infinite modifications of the same principle of conduct, all pointing to annihilation. This, e.g., is the leading principle of the Gymnosophists, as the Greeks called them. Naked Fakirs wander about without any occupation, like the mendicant friars of the Catholic church; live on the alms of others, and make it their aim to reach the highest degree of abstraction—the perfect deadening of consciousness; a point from which the transition to physical death is no great step.

This elevation which others can only attain by toilsome labor is, as already stated, the birthright of the Brahmins. The Hindu of another caste, must, therefore, reverence the Brahmin as a divinity; fall down before him, and say to him: “Thou art God.” And this elevation cannot have anything to do with moral conduct, but—inasmuch as all internal

<sup>2</sup> Another instance of the same is the fact of wives burning themselves after the death of their husbands. Should a woman contravene this traditional usage, she would be severed from society, and perish in solitude. An Englishman states that he also saw a woman burn herself because she had lost her child. He did all that he could to divert her away from her purpose; at last he applied to her husband who was standing by, but he showed himself perfectly indifferent, as he had more wives at home. Sometimes twenty women are seen throwing themselves at once into the Ganges, and on the Himalaya range an English traveler found three women seeking the source of the Ganges, in order to put an end to their life in this holy river. At a religious festival in the celebrated temple of Juggernaut in Orissa, on the Bay of Bengal, where millions of Hindus assemble, the image of the god Vishnu is drawn in procession on a car: about five hundred men set it in motion, and many fling themselves down before its wheels to be crushed to pieces. The whole seashore is already strewn with the bodies of persons who have thus immolated themselves.



morality is absent—is rather dependent on a farrago of observances relating to the merest externalities and trivialities of existence. Human life, it is said, ought to be a perpetual Worship of God. It is evident how hollow such general aphorisms are, when we consider the concrete forms which they may assume. They require another, a further qualification, if they are to have a meaning. The Brahmins are a present deity, but their spirituality has not yet been reflected inwards in contrast with Nature; and thus that which is purely indifferent is treated as of absolute importance. The employment of the Brahmins consists principally in the reading of the Vedas: they only have a right to read them. Were a Shudra to read the Vedas, or to hear them read, he would be severely punished, and burning oil must be poured into his ears. The external observances binding on the Brahmins are prodigiously numerous, and the Laws of Manu treat of them as the most essential part of duty. The Brahmin must rest on one particular foot in rising, then wash in a river; his hair and nails must be cut in neat curves, his whole body purified, his garments white; in his hand must be a staff of a specified kind; in his ears a golden earring. If the Brahmin meets a man of an inferior caste, he must turn back and purify himself. He has also to read in the Vedas, in various ways: each word separately, or doubling them alternately, or backwards. He may not look to the sun when rising or setting, or when overcast by clouds or reflected in the water. He is forbidden to step over a rope to which a calf is fastened, or to go out when it rains.<sup>3</sup> It is forbidden to everyone who desires a long life to step on potsherds, cotton seeds, ashes, or sheaves of corn, or his urine. In the episode Nala, in the poem of Mahabharata, we have a story of a virgin who in her 21st year—the age in which the maidens themselves have a right to choose a

<sup>3</sup> He may not look at his wife when she eats, sneezes, yawns, or is quietly seated. At the midday meal he may not wear only one garment, in bathing never be quite naked. How minute these directions are may be especially judged of from the observances binding on the Brahmins in regard to satisfying the calls of nature. This is forbidden to them in a great thoroughfare, on ashes, on ploughed land, on a hill, a nest of white ants, on wood destined for fuel, in a ditch, walking or standing, on the bank of a river, etc. At such a time they may not look at the sun, at water, or at animals. By day they should keep their face generally directed to the north, but by night to the south; only in the shade are they allowed to turn to which quarter they like.

husband—makes a selection from among her wooers. There are five of them; but the maiden remarks that four of them do not stand firmly on their feet, and thence infers correctly that they are Gods. She therefore chooses the fifth, who is a veritable man. But besides the four despised divinities there are two malevolent ones, whom her choice had not favored, and who on that account wish for revenge. They therefore keep a strict watch on the husband of their beloved in every step and act of life, with the design of inflicting injury upon him if he commits a misdemeanor. The persecuted husband does nothing that can be brought against him, until at last he is so incautious as to step on his urine. The Genius has now an advantage over him; he afflicts him with a passion for gambling, and so plunges him into the abyss.

While, on the one hand, the Brahmins are subject to these strict limitations and rules, on the other hand their life is sacred; it cannot answer for crimes of any kind; and their property is equally secure from being attacked. The severest penalty which the ruler can inflict upon them amounts to nothing more than banishment. The English wished to introduce trial by jury into India—the jury to consist half of Europeans, half of Hindus—and submitted to the natives, whose wishes on the subject were consulted, the powers with which the panel would be entrusted. The Hindus were for making a number of exceptions and limitations. They said, among other things, that they could not consent that a Brahmin should be condemned to death; not to mention other objections, e.g., that looking at and examining a corpse was out of the question. Although in the case of a Warrior the rate of interest may be as high as three per cent, in that of a Vaishya four per cent, a Brahmin is never required to pay more than two per cent. The Brahmin possesses such a power, that Heaven's lightning would strike the King who ventured to lay hands on him or his property. For the meanest Brahmin is so far exalted above the King, that he would be polluted by conversing with him, and would be dishonored by his daughters choosing a prince in marriage. In Manu's Code it is said: "If anyone presumes to teach a Brahmin his duty, the King must order that hot oil be poured into the ears and mouth of such an instructor. If one who is only once-born, loads one who is twice-born with reproaches, a red hot iron bar ten inches long shall be thrust into his mouth." On the other hand a Shudra is condemned to have a red hot iron thrust into him from behind if he rest himself in the chair of

a Brahmin, and to have his foot or his hand hewed off if he pushes against a Brahmin with hands or feet. It is even permitted to give false testimony, and to lie before a Court of Justice, if a Brahmin can be thereby freed from condemnation.

As the Brahmins enjoy advantages over the other Castes, the latter in their turn have privileges according to precedence, over their inferiors. If a Shudra is defiled by contact with a Pariah, he has the right to knock him down on the spot. Humanity on the part of a higher Caste towards an inferior one is entirely forbidden, and a Brahmin would never think of assisting a member of another Caste, even when in danger. The other Castes deem it a great honor when a Brahmin takes their daughters as his wives—a thing however, which is permitted him, as already stated, only when he has already taken one from his own Caste. Thence arises the freedom the Brahmins enjoy in getting wives. At the great religious festivals they go among the people and choose those that please them best; but they also repudiate them at pleasure.

If a Brahmin or a member of any other Caste transgresses the above cited laws and precepts, he is himself excluded from his caste, and in order to be received back again, he must have a hook bored through the hips, and be swung repeatedly backwards and forwards in the air. There are also other forms of restoration. A Raja who thought himself injured by an English Governor sent two Brahmins to England to detail his grievances. But the Hindus are forbidden to cross the sea, and these envoys on their return were declared excommunicated from their caste, and in order to be restored to it, they had to be born again from a golden cow. The imposition was so far lightened, that only those parts of the cow out of which they had to creep were obliged to be golden; the rest might consist of wood. These various usages and religious observances to which every Caste is subject have occasioned great perplexity to the English, especially in enlisting soldiers. At first these were taken from the Shudra-Caste, which is not bound to observe so many ceremonies; but nothing could be done with them, they therefore betook themselves to the Kshatriya class. These however have an immense number of regulations to observe—they may not eat meat, touch a dead body, drink out of a pool in which cattle or Europeans have drunk, not eat what others have cooked, etc. Each Hindu assumes one definite occupation, and that only, so that one must have an infinity of servants; a Lieutenant has thirty, a Major sixty. Thus every Caste

has its own duties; the lower the Caste, the less it has to observe; and as each individual has his position assigned by birth, beyond this fixed arrangement everything is governed by caprice and force. In the Code of Manu punishments increase in proportion to the inferiority of Castes, and there is a distinction in other respects. If a man of a higher Caste brings an accusation against an inferior without proof, the former is not punished; if the converse occurs, the punishment is very severe. Cases of theft are exceptional; in this case the higher the Caste the heavier is the penalty.

In respect to property the Brahmins have a great advantage, for they pay no taxes. The prince receives half the income from the lands of others; the remainder has to suffice for the cost of cultivation and the support of the laborers. It is an extremely important question, whether the cultivated land in India is recognized as belonging to the cultivator, or belongs to a so-called manorial proprietor. The English themselves have had great difficulty in establishing a clear understanding about it. For when they conquered Bengal, it was of great importance to them, to determine the mode in which taxes were to be raised on property, and they had to ascertain whether these should be imposed on the tenant cultivators or the lord of the soil. They imposed the tribute on the latter; but the result was that the proprietors acted in the most arbitrary manner: drove away the tenant cultivators, and declaring that such or such an amount of land was not under cultivation, gained an abatement of tribute. They then took back the expelled cultivators as day-laborers, at a low rate of wages, and had the land cultivated on their own behalf. The whole income belonging to every village is, as already stated, divided into two parts, of which one belongs to the Raja, the other to the cultivators; but proportionate shares are also received by the Provost of the place, the Judge, the Water-Surveyor, the Brahmin who superintends religious worship, the Astrologer (who is also a Brahmin, and announces the days of good and ill omen), the Smith, the Carpenter, the Potter, the Washerman, the Barber, the Physician, the Dancing Girls, the Musician, the Poet. This arrangement is fixed and immutable, and subject to no one's will. All political revolutions, therefore, are matters of indifference to the common Hindu, for his lot is unchanged.

The view given of the relation of castes leads directly to the subject of Religion. For the claims of caste are, as already remarked, not merely secular, but essentially religious, and the Brahmins in their exalted dignity

are the very gods bodily present. In the laws of Manu it is said: "Let the King, even in extreme necessity, beware of exciting the Brahmins against him; for they can destroy him with their power—they who create Fire, Sun, Moon, etc." They are servants neither of God nor of his People, but are God himself to the other Castes—a position of things which constitutes the perverted character of the Hindu mind. The dreaming Unity of Spirit and nature, which involves a monstrous bewilderment in regard to all phenomena and relations, we have already recognized as the principle of the Hindu Spirit. The Hindu Mythology is therefore only a wild extravagance of Fancy, in which nothing has a settled form; which takes us abruptly from the Meanest to the Highest, from the most sublime to the most disgusting and trivial. Thus it is also difficult to discover what the Hindus understand by Brahm. We are apt to take our conception of Supreme Divinity—the One—the Creator of Heaven and Earth—and apply it to the Indian Brahm. Brahma is distinct from Brahm—the former constituting one personality in contrasted relation to Vishnu and Shiva. Many therefore call the Supreme Existence who is over the first mentioned deity, Para-brahma. The English have taken a good deal of trouble to find out what Brahm properly is. Wilford has asserted that Hindu conceptions recognize two Heavens: the first, the earthly paradise, the second, Heaven in a spiritual sense. To attain them, two different modes of worship are supposed to be required. The one involves external ceremonies, Idol-Worship; the other requires that the Supreme Being should be honored in spirit. Sacrifices, purifications, pilgrimages are not needed in the latter. This authority states moreover that there are few Hindus ready to pursue the second way, because they cannot understand in what the pleasure of the second heaven consists, and that if one asks a Hindu whether he worships Idols, every one says "Yes!" but to the question, "Do you worship the Supreme Being?" every one answers "No."<sup>4</sup> Translating these ideas then into our own process of thought, we should

<sup>4</sup> If the further question is put, "What is the meaning of that practice of yours, that silent meditation which some of your learned men speak of?" they respond, "When I pray to the honor of one of the Gods, I sit down—the foot of either leg on the thigh of the other—look towards Heaven, and calmly elevate my thoughts with my hands folded in silence; then I say, I am Brahm the Supreme Being. We are not conscious to ourselves of being Brahm, by reason of Maya (the delusion occasioned by the outward world). It is forbidden

call Brahm the pure unity of thought in itself—God in the incompleteness of his existence. No temples are consecrated to him, and he receives no worship. Similarly, in the Catholic religion, the churches are not dedicated to God, but to the saints. Other Englishmen, who have devoted themselves to investigating the conception of Brahm, have thought Brahm to be an unmeaning epithet, applied to all gods: so that Vishnu says, "I am Brahm"; and the Sun, the Air, the Seas are called Brahm. Brahm would on this supposition be substance in its simplicity, which by its very nature expands itself into the limitless variety of phenomenal diversities. For this abstraction, this pure unity, is that which lies at the foundation of All—the root of all definite existence. In the intellection of this unity, all objectivity falls away; for the purely Abstract is intellection itself in its greatest vacuity. To attain this Death of Life during life itself—to constitute this abstraction—requires the disappearance of all moral activity and volition, and of all intellection too, as in the Religion of Fo [i.e., Fo Jian, Han Chinese Buddhism]; and this is the object of the penances already spoken of.

The complement to the abstraction Brahm must then be looked for in the concrete complex of things; for the principle of the Hindu religion is the Manifestation of Diversity (in "Avatars"). These then, fall outside that abstract Unity of Thought, and as that which deviates from it, constitute the variety found in the world of sense, the variety of intellectual conceptions in an unreflected sensuous form. In this way the concrete complex of material things is isolated from Spirit, and presented in wild distraction, except as re-absorbed in the pure ideality of Brahm. The other deities are therefore things of sense: Mountains, Streams, Beasts, the Sun, the Moon, the Ganges. The next stage is the concentration of this wild variety into substantial distinctions, and the comprehension of them as a series of divine persons. Vishnu, Shiva, Mahadeva are thus distinguished from Brahma. In the embodiment Vishnu are presented those incarnations in which God has appeared as man, and which are always historical personages, who effected important changes and new epochs. The power of procreation is likewise a substantial embodiment; and in the excavations, grottos, and pagodas of the Hindus, the Lingam is always found as symbolizing the male, and the Lotus the female vis procreandi.

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to pray to him, and to offer sacrifices to him in his own nature; for this would be to adore ourselves. In every case therefore, it is only emanations of Brahm that we address."

With this Duality—abstract unity on the one side and the abstract isolation of the world of sense on the other side—exactly corresponds the double form of Worship, in the relation of the human subjectivity to God. The one side of this duality of worship consists in the abstraction of pure self-elevation—the abrogation of real self-consciousness; a negativity which is consequently manifested, on the one hand, in the attainment of torpid unconsciousness—on the other hand in suicide and the extinction of all that is worth calling life, by self-inflicted tortures. The other side of worship consists in a wild tumult of excess; when all sense of individuality has vanished from consciousness by immersion in the merely natural; with which individuality thus makes itself identical—destroying its consciousness of distinction from Nature. In all the pagodas, therefore, prostitutes and dancing girls are kept, whom the Brahmins instruct most carefully in dancing, in beautiful postures and attractive gestures, and who have to comply with the wishes of all comers at a fixed price. Theological doctrine—relation of religion to morality—is here altogether out of the question. On the one hand Love—Heaven—in short everything spiritual—is conceived by the fancy of the Hindu; but on the other hand his conceptions have an actual sensuous embodiment, and he immerses himself by a voluptuous intoxication in the merely natural. Objects of religious worship are thus either disgusting forms produced by art, or those presented by Nature. Every bird, every monkey, is a present god, an absolutely universal existence. The Hindu is incapable of holding fast an object in his mind by means of rational predicates assigned to it, for this requires reflection. While a universal essence is wrongly transmuted into sensuous objectivity, the latter is also driven from its definite character into universality—a process whereby it loses its footing and is expanded to indefiniteness.

If we proceed to ask how far their religion exhibits the Morality of the Hindus, the answer must be that the former is as distinct from the latter, as Brahm from the concrete existence of which he is the essence. To us, religion is the knowledge of that Being who is emphatically our Being, and therefore the substance of our knowledge and volition; the proper office of which latter is to be the mirror of this fundamental substance. But that requires this (Highest) Being to be in so a personality, pursuing divine aims, such as can become the purport of human action. Such an idea of a relation of the Being of God as constituting the universal basis or substance of human action—such a morality cannot be found among

the Hindus; for they have not the Spiritual as the import of their consciousness. On the one hand their virtue consists in the abstraction from all activity—the condition they call “Brahm.” On the other hand every action with them is a prescribed external usage; not free activity, the result of inward personality. Thus the moral condition of the Hindus (as already observed) shows itself most abandoned. In this all Englishmen agree. Our judgment of the morality of the Hindus is apt to be warped by representations of their mildness, tenderness, beautiful and sentimental fancy. But we must reflect that in nations utterly corrupt, there are sides of character which may be called tender and noble. We have Chinese poems in which the tenderest relations of love are depicted; in which delineations of deep emotion, humility, modesty, propriety are to be found; and which may be compared with the best that European literature contains. The same characteristics meet us in many Hindu poems; but rectitude, morality, freedom of soul, consciousness of individual right are quite another thing. The annihilating of spiritual and physical existence has nothing concrete in it; and absorption in the abstractly Universal has no connection with the real. Deceit and cunning are the fundamental characteristics of the Hindu. Cheating, stealing, robbing, murdering are with him habitual. Humbly crouching and abject before a victor and lord, he is recklessly barbarous to the vanquished and subject. Characteristic of the Hindu's humanity is the fact that he kills no brute animal, founds and supports rich hospitals for brutes, especially for old cows and monkeys—but that through the whole land, no single institution can be found for human beings who are diseased or infirm from age. The Hindus will not tread upon ants, but they are perfectly indifferent when poor wanderers pine away with hunger. The Brahmins are especially immoral. According to English reports, they do nothing but eat and sleep. In what is not forbidden them by the rules of their order they follow natural impulses entirely. When they take any part in public life they show themselves avaricious, deceitful, voluptuous. With those whom they have reason to fear, they are humble enough; for which they avenge themselves on their dependents. “I do not know an honest man among them,” says an English authority. Children have no respect for their parents: sons maltreat their mothers.

It would lead us too far to give a detailed notice of Hindu Art and Science. But we may make the general remark, that a more accurate acquaintance with its real value has not a little diminished the widely



bruited fame of Indian Wisdom. According to the Hindu principle of pure self-renouncing Ideality, and that (phenomenal) variety which goes to the opposite extreme of sensuousness, it is evident that nothing but abstract thought and imagination can be developed. Thus, e.g., their grammar has advanced to a high degree of consistent regularity; but when substantial matter in sciences and works of art is in question, it is useless to look for it here. When the English had become masters of the country, the work of restoring to light the records of Indian culture was commenced, and William Jones first disinterred the poems of the Golden Age. The English exhibited plays at Calcutta: this led to a representation of dramas on the part of the Brahmins, e.g., the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa, etc. In the enthusiasm of discovery the Hindu culture was very highly rated; and as, when new beauties are discovered, the old ones are commonly looked down upon with contempt, Hindu poetry and philosophy were extolled as far superior to the Greek. For our purpose the most important documents are the ancient and canonical books of the Hindus, especially the Vedas. They comprise many divisions, of which the fourth is of more recent origin. They consist partly of religious prayers, partly of precepts to be observed. Some manuscripts of these Vedas have come to Europe, though in a complete form they are exceedingly rare. The writing is on palm leaves, scratched in with a needle. The Vedas are very difficult to understand, since they date from the most remote antiquity, and the language is a much older Sanskrit. Colebrooke has indeed translated a part, but this itself is perhaps taken from a commentary, of which there are very many. Two great epic poems, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, have also reached Europe. Three quarto volumes of the former have been printed, the second volume is extremely rare. Besides these works, the Puranas must be particularly noticed. The Puranas contain the history of a god or of a temple. They are entirely fanciful. Another Hindu classical book is the Code of Manu. This Hindu lawgiver has been compared with the Cretan Minos—a name which also occurs among the Egyptians; and certainly this extensive occurrence of the same name is noteworthy and cannot be ascribed to chance. Manu's code of morals (published at Calcutta with an English translation by Sir W. Jones) forms the basis of Hindu legislation. It begins with a Theogony, which is not only entirely different from the mythological conceptions of other peoples (as might be expected), but also deviates essentially from the Hindu traditions themselves. For in

these also there are only some leading features that pervade the whole. In other respects everything is abandoned to chance, caprice and fancy; the result of which is that the most multiform traditions, shapes and names, appear in never ending procession. The time when Manu's code was composed, is also entirely unknown and undetermined. The traditions reach beyond twenty-three centuries before the birth of Christ: a dynasty of the Children of the Sun is mentioned, on which followed one of the Children of the Moon. Thus much, however, is certain, that the code in question is of high antiquity; and an acquaintance with it is of the greatest importance to the English, as their knowledge of Hindu Law is derived from it.

After pointing out the Hindu principle in the distinctions of caste, in religion and literature, we must also mention the mode and form of their political existence—the polity of the Hindu State.—A State is a realization of Spirit, such that in it the self conscious being of Spirit—the freedom of the Will—is realized as Law. Such an institution then, necessarily presupposes the consciousness of free will. In the Chinese State the moral will of the Emperor is the law: but so that subjective, inward freedom is thereby repressed, and the Law of Freedom governs individuals only as from without. In India the primary aspect of subjectivity—viz., that of the imagination—presents a union of the Natural and Spiritual, in which Nature on the one hand, does not present itself as a world embodying Reason, nor the Spiritual on the other hand, as consciousness in contrast with Nature. Here the antithesis in the (above-stated) principle is wanting. Freedom both as abstract will and as subjective freedom is absent. The proper basis of the State, the principle of freedom is altogether absent: there cannot therefore be any State in the true sense of the term. This is the first point to be observed: if China may be regarded as nothing else but a State, Hindu political existence presents us with a people, but no State. Secondly, while we found a moral despotism in China, whatever may be called a relic of political life in India, is a despotism without a principle, without any rule of morality and religion: for morality and religion (as far as the latter has a reference to human action) have as their indispensable condition and basis the freedom of the Will. In India, therefore, the most arbitrary, wicked, degrading despotism has its full swing. China, Persia, Turkey—in fact Asia generally, is the scene of despotism, and, in a bad sense, of tyranny; but it is regarded as contrary to the due order

of things, and is disapproved by religion and the moral consciousness of individuals. In those countries, tyranny rouses men to resentment; they detest it and groan under it as a burden. To them it is an accident and an irregularity, not a necessity: it ought not to exist. But in India it is normal: for here there is no sense of personal independence with which a state of despotism could be compared, and which would raise revolt in the soul; nothing approaching even a resentful protest against it, is left, except the corporeal smart, and the pain of being deprived of absolute necessities and of pleasure.

In the case of such a people, therefore, that which we call in its double sense, History, is not to be looked for; and here the distinction between China and India is most clearly and strongly manifest. The Chinese possess a most minute history of their country, and it has been already remarked what arrangements are made in China for having everything accurately noted down in their annals. The contrary is the case in India. Though the recent discoveries of the treasures of Indian Literature have shown us what a reputation the Hindus have acquired in Geometry, Astronomy, and Algebra—that they have made great advances in Philosophy, and that among them, Grammar has been so far cultivated that no language can be regarded as more fully developed than Sanskrit—we find the department of History altogether neglected, or rather non-existent. For History requires Understanding—the power of looking at an object in an independent objective light, and comprehending it in its rational connection with other objects. Those peoples therefore are alone capable of History, and of prose generally, who have arrived at that period of development (and can make that their starting point) at which individuals comprehend their own existence as independent, i.e., possess self-consciousness. The Chinese are to be rated at what they have made of themselves, looking at them in the entirety of their State. While they have thus attained an existence independent of Nature, they can also regard objects as distinct from themselves—as they are actually presented—in a definite form and in their real connection. The Hindus on the contrary are by birth given over to an unyielding destiny, while at the same time their Spirit is exalted to Ideality; so that their minds exhibit the contradictory processes of a dissolution of fixed rational and definite conceptions in their Ideality, and on the other side, a degradation of this ideality to a multiformity of sensuous objects. This makes them incapable of writing History. All that happens is dissipated

in their minds into confused dreams. What we call historical truth and veracity—intelligent, thoughtful comprehension of events, and fidelity in representing them—nothing of this sort can be looked for among the Hindus. We may explain this deficiency partly from that excitement and debility of the nerves, which prevent them from retaining an object in their minds, and firmly comprehending it, for in their mode of apprehension, a sensitive and imaginative temperament changes it into a feverish dream; partly from the fact, that veracity is the direct contrary to their nature. They even lie knowingly and designedly where misapprehension is out of the question. As the Hindu Spirit is a state of dreaming and mental transiency—a self-oblivious dissolution—objects also dissolve for it into unreal images and indefinitude. This feature is absolutely characteristic; and this alone would furnish us with a clear idea of the Spirit of the Hindus, from which all that has been said might be deduced.

But History is always of great importance for a people; since by means of that it becomes conscious of the path of development taken by its own Spirit, which expresses itself in Laws, Manners, Customs, and Deeds. Laws, comprising morals and judicial institutions, are by nature the permanent element in a people's existence. But History presents a people with their own image in a condition which thereby becomes objective to them. Without History their existence in time is blindly self-involved—the recurring play of arbitrary volition in manifold forms. History fixes and imparts consistency to this fortuitous current—gives it the form of Universality, and by so doing posits a directive and restrictive rule for it. It is an essential instrument in developing and determining the Constitution—that is, a rational political condition; for it is the empirical method of producing the Universal, inasmuch as it sets up a permanent object for the conceptive powers. It is because the Hindus have no History in the form of annals (*historia*) that they have no History in the form of transactions (*res gestae*); that is, no growth expanding into a veritable political condition.

Periods of time are mentioned in the Hindu Writings, and large numbers which have often an astronomical meaning, but which have still oftener a quite arbitrary origin. Thus it is related of certain Kings that they had reigned 70,000 years, or more. Brahma, the first figure in the Cosmogony, and self-produced, is said to have lived 20,000 years, etc. Innumerable names of Kings are cited—among them the incarnations

of Vishnu. It would be ridiculous to regard passages of this kind as anything historical. In their poems Kings are often talked of: these may have been historical personages, but they completely vanish in fable; e.g., they retire from the world, and then appear again, after they have passed ten thousand years in solitude. The numbers in question, therefore, have not the value and rational meaning which we attach to them.

Consequently the oldest and most reliable sources of Indian History are the notices of Greek Authors, after Alexander the Great had opened the way to India. From them we learn that their institutions were the same at that early period as they are now: Santaracottus (Chandragupta) is marked out as a distinguished ruler in the northern part of India, to which the Bactrian kingdom extended. The Mohammadan historians supply another source of information; for the Mohammadans began their invasions as early as the tenth century. A Turkish slave was the ancestor of the Ghiznian race. His son Mahmoud made an inroad into Hindustan and conquered almost the whole country. He fixed his royal residence west of Kabul, and at his court lived the poet Ferdowsi. The Ghiznian dynasty was soon entirely exterminated by the sweeping attacks of the Afghans and Moguls. In later times nearly the whole of India has been subjected to the Europeans. What therefore is known of Indian history, has for the most part been communicated through foreign channels: the native literature gives only indistinct data. Europeans assure us of the impossibility of wading through the morasses of Indian statements. More definite information may be obtained from inscriptions and documents, especially from the deeds of gifts of land to pagodas and divinities; but this kind of evidence supplies names only. Another source of information is the astronomical literature, which is of high antiquity. Colebrooke thoroughly studied these writings; though it is very difficult to procure manuscripts, since the Brahmins keep them very close; they are moreover disfigured by the grossest interpolations. It is found that the statements with regard to constellations are often contradictory, and that the Brahmins interpolate these ancient works with events belonging to their own time. The Hindus do indeed possess lists and enumerations of their Kings, but these also are of the most capricious character; for we often find twenty Kings more in one list than in another; and should these lists even be correct, they could not constitute a history. The Brahmins have no conscience in respect to truth. Captain Wilford had procured manuscripts from all quarters

with great trouble and expense; he assembled a considerable number of Brahmins, and commissioned them to make extracts from these works, and to institute inquiries respecting certain remarkable events—about Adam and Eve, the Deluge, etc. The Brahmins, to please their employer, produced statements of the kind required; but there was nothing of the sort in the manuscripts. Wilford wrote many treatises on the subject, till at last he detected the deception, and saw that he had labored in vain. The Hindus have, it is true, a fixed Era: they reckon from Vikramaditya, at whose splendid court lived Kalidasa, the author of the *Shakuntala*. The most illustrious poets flourished about the same time. "There were nine pearls at the court of Vikramaditya," say the Brahmins: but we cannot discover the date of this brilliant epoch. From various statements, the year 1491 B.C. has been contended for; others adopt the year 50 B.C., and this is the commonly received opinion. Bentley's researches at length placed Vikramaditya in the twelfth century B.C. But still more recently it has been discovered that there were five, or even eight or nine kings of that name in India; so that on this point also we are thrown back into utter uncertainty.

When the Europeans became acquainted with India, they found a multitude of petty Kingdoms, at whose head were Mohammadan and Indian princes. There was an order of things very nearly approaching feudal organization; and the Kingdoms in question were divided into districts, having as governors Mohamadans, or people of the Warrior Caste of Hindus. The business of these governors consisted in collecting taxes and carrying on wars; and they thus formed a kind of aristocracy, the Prince's Council of State. But only as far as their princes are feared and excite fear, have they any power; and no obedience is rendered to them but by force. As long as the prince does not want money, he has troops; and neighboring princes, if they are inferior to him in force, are often obliged to pay taxes, but which are yielded only on compulsion. The whole state of things, therefore, is not that of repose, but of continual struggle; while moreover nothing is developed or furthered. It is the struggle of an energetic will on the part of this or that prince against a feebler one; the history of reigning dynasties, but not of peoples; a series of perpetually varying intrigues and revolts—not indeed of subjects against their rulers, but of a prince's son, for instance, against his father; of brothers, uncles and nephews in contest with each other; and of functionaries against their master. It might be

believed that, though the Europeans found such a state of things, this was the result of the dissolution of earlier superior organizations. It might, for instance, be supposed that the period of the Mogul supremacy was of one of prosperity and splendor, and of a political condition in which India was not distracted religiously and politically by foreign conquerors. But the historical traces and lineaments that accidentally present themselves in poetical descriptions and legends, bearing upon the period in question, always point to the same divided condition—the result of war and of the instability of political relations; while contrary representations may be easily recognized as a dream, a mere fancy. This state of things is the natural result of that conception of Hindu life which has been exhibited, and the conditions which it necessitates. The wars of the sects of the Brahmins and Buddhists, of the devotees of Vishnu and of Siva, also contributed their quota to this confusion. There is indeed, a common character pervading the whole of India; but its several states present at the same time the greatest variety; so that in one Indian State we meet with the greatest effeminacy—in another, on the contrary, we find prodigious vigor and savage barbarity.

If then, in conclusion, we once more take a general view of the comparative condition of India and China, we shall see that China was characterized by a thoroughly unimaginative Understanding; a prosaic life amid firm and definite reality: while in the Indian world there is, so to speak, no object that can be regarded as real, and firmly defined—none that was not at its first apprehension perverted by the imagination to the very opposite of what it presents to an intelligent consciousness. In China it is the Moral which constitutes the substance of the laws, and which is embodied in external strictly determinate relations; while over all hovers the patriarchal providence of the Emperor, who like a Father, cares impartially for the interest of his subjects. Among the Hindus, on the contrary—instead of this Unity—Diversity is the fundamental characteristic. Religion, War, Handicraft, Trade, yes, even the most trivial occupations are parceled out with rigid separation—constituting as they do the import of the one will which they involve, and whose various requirements they exhaust. With this is bound up a monstrous, irrational imagination, which attaches the moral value and character of men to an infinity of outward actions as empty in point of intellect as of feeling; sets aside all respect for the welfare of man, and even makes a duty of the cruelest and severest contravention of it. Those distinctions

being rigidly maintained, nothing remains for the one universal will of the State but pure caprice, against whose omnipotence only the fixed caste-distinctions avail for protection. The Chinese in their prosaic rationality, reverence as the Highest, only the abstract supremelord; and they exhibit a contemptibly superstitious respect for the fixed and definite.

Among the Hindus there is no such superstition so far as it presents an antithesis to Understanding; rather their whole life and ideas are one unbroken superstition, because among them all is reverie and consequent enslavement. Annihilation—the abandonment of all reason, morality, and subjectivity—can only come to a positive feeling and consciousness of itself, by extravagating in a boundlessly wild imagination; in which, like a desolate spirit, it finds no rest, no settled composure, though it can content itself in no other way; as a man who is quite reduced in body and spirit finds his existence altogether stupid and intolerable, and is driven to the creation of a dream-world and a delirious bliss in Opium.



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## Lectures on the Philosophy of Fine Art\*

### Fantastic Symbolism

Quitting now the sphere of thought in which the identity of the Absolute and its externally envisaged existence is immediately cognized, we have, as an essential determination to start from, the severation of these two aspects hitherto united, a *cleavage* which stimulates the effort to restore once more the visible breach by means of an elaborate fusing together of the whole thus divided by a rich use of the images of fantasy. With this attempt the essential need for art is felt for the first time. No sooner has the imagination succeeded in holding fast its envisaged content, which is no longer grasped in immediate union with the objects of sense, in isolated separation from that existence, than for the first time spirit is confronted with the task of reclothing with the material of fantasy for sensuous perception, that is, under the

\* From *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston, vol. 2, 4 vols (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), Second Part; Chapter 1 ("Unconscious Symbolism"), Part B: "Fantastic Symbolism", pp. 47-65; Part C: "Real Symbolism", pp. 65-66; Chapter 2 (*The Symbolism of the Sublime*), Part A: Section 1: "Hindoo Poetry", pp. 89-92.

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renewed mode of a spiritual product, these general conceptions and of creating through this activity the shapes of art. And for the reason that in the stage of our process where we now find ourselves, this task is capable of only a symbolic solution, we may easily fall under the impression that we stand already in the sphere of genuine symbolism. This, however, is not the case. What immediately faces us here are the forms of a fermenting fantasy, which in the restlessness of its fantastic dreams merely indicates the path which conducts us to the real center of symbolical art. In the first appearance of the distinguishing relation between significance and the mode of its presentation, both the severation and the association are still grasped in a confused manner. This confusion is necessitated by the fact that neither of the parted aspects of difference have as yet attained a totality, capable of emphasizing the precise point in the process, which will serve as the fundamental determination of the opposed side in it, and by means of which for the first time a really adequate union and reconciliation is rendered possible. Spirit (mind), to illustrate our difficulty further, determines by virtue of its own totality the side of the external phenomenon out of its own essential substance quite as really as it does its own spiritual content for the obvious reason that the essentially complete and independent phenomenon only receives its adequate form as the external existence of that which is spiritual. In the case, however, of this primary severation of the significances apprehended by mind, and the existent world of phenomena such aspects of significance are not those of concrete spiritual life, but abstractions, and this expression also is entirely destitute of spiritual intension, and is consequently, in an abstract sense, purely external and sensuous. This twofold impulse in the direction of disunion and union is for the same reason an unsteady gait, which ranges from the objects of sense in undefined and unmeasured waste immediately to the aspects of universal import, and is only able to discover for the inward content of consciousness the absolutely opposed form of sensuous shapes. And it is this very contradiction which is set forth as a means of really uniting elements which contradict each other. The result is that instead of so doing it is first driven from one side of the opposition into the other, and then again is hurled in its ceaselessly alternating dance into the former extreme, while it believes that in this rocking to and fro of its strain it has found the means to lull itself to repose. Instead of getting, therefore, a true satisfaction we

have the *contradiction* merely affirmed as its genuine resolution, and in addition the union most incomplete of all is set forth as that which art really requires. We must not therefore expect to find in such a field of confusion worse confounded the true forms of beauty. In this restless leap from one opposed extreme to the other all that we find from one point of view in the sensuous material that is absorbed, regarding the same in its singularity no less than as it constitutes its elementary appearance to sense, is that the breadth and potency of every import of universality is associated therewith in what must consequently be a wholly inadequate way. From another aspect that which is most universal, as soon as the process has passed from the same, is shamelessly plunged under the reverse treatment into the very heart of the sensuous present; and if any feeling of the incompatibility of such an effort is consciously perceived, the imagination here is only capable of rendering assistance by means of distortions which carry the particular shapes over and beyond their own secure boundaries, adding to their extension, making them ever more indefinite, by an imaginative leap which mounts to the immeasurable, breaks up every bond of union, and in its very strain after reconciliation reveals each opposing factor in its most unmitigated hostility.

These earliest and still most uncontrolled attempts of imagination and art we meet most signally among the ancient races of India, the main defect of whose productions, when viewed relatively to their particular position at this stage of our classification, consists in this, that they are neither able to seize the profounder aspects of significance in independent clarity, nor grasp the reality of sense-perception in its characteristic form and meaning. The Hindu race has consequently proved itself unable to comprehend either persons or events as parts of continuous history, because to any historical treatment a certain soberness is essential of accepting and understanding facts in their true and independent form, and subject to their mediating links, grounds, causes, and objects, being empirically ascertained. The natural impulse to refer all and everything back to the Divine is hostile to this prosaic reasonableness, no less than its tendency to prefigure for itself in the most ordinary or most sensuous of objects a presence and reality of godhead created by its own imagination. These peoples consequently, through their confused intermingling of the Finite and the Absolute, in which the logical order and permanence of the prosaic facts of ordinary

consciousness are disregarded altogether, despite all the profusion and extraordinary boldness of their conceptions, fall into a levity of fantastic mirage which is quite as remarkable, a flightiness which dances from the most spiritual and profoundest matters to the meanest trifle of present experience, in order that it may interchange and confuse immediately the one extreme with the other.

If we concentrate our attention more closely upon the more conspicuous features of this continuous bout of intoxication, this craze and condition of craze, what we are concerned with is not to trace religious conceptions as such, but merely to emphasize the points of prominence which relate such modes of conception with art. These may be indicated as follows:

1. One extreme of the consciousness of the Hindu is the consciousness of the Absolute, here regarded as the essentially and absolutely Universal, undifferentiated and consequently wholly indefinite. This supreme of abstractions, inasmuch as it is neither in possession of a particular content, nor is conceived under the mode of concrete personality, is, from whatever side you may look at it, no object at all that the imagination acting through the senses can reclothe for art. Brahman, taken in a general sense as this supreme Godhead, is absolutely removed from the sensuous and sense-perception, or rather is not even an object for Thought. For self-consciousness is inseparable from thought, which posits itself as an object of Thought, in order that it may thus come to self-knowledge. Every act of intelligence is an identification of the ego and object, a reconciliation of that which is severed outside from this relation of recognition; what I do not understand remains as something strange and foreign to myself. The mode of union, under the Hindu conception, of human personality with Brahman is nothing more nor less than a continually ascending process of exhaustion in the direction of this supreme of abstractions, in which not merely the entire concrete content, but also self-consciousness itself, must be eliminated before the final consummation is realized. Or, to put the same thing another way, the Hindu recognizes no reconciliation and identity with Brahman in the sense that the spirit of humanity becomes *conscious* of this union. The unity rather consists in this, that both consciousness and self-consciousness, and with them the entire content of the objective world and personality totally disappears. This emptying and annihilation to the point of absolute vacuity is treated as the supreme condition under

which man is capable of identity with highest Divinity, that is Brahman. An abstraction of this sort, one of the barest it is possible to imagine, whether we consider it from the point of view of the Absolute, as Brahman, or from the human aspect of a purely theoretically conceived cultus that consists in man's self-evaporation and self-annihilation, is in itself no object either for the imagination or art; all the latter can do is to profit by such opportunity as various imaginary representations of what happens by the way to this goal may offer for their exercise.

2. Conversely the Hindu view of existence launches itself with just the same immediacy over this very abstraction from all sense into the wildest flood of it. Inasmuch, however, as the immediate and consequently unbroken identity of both sides is in this view cancelled, and instead of this the element of *difference* within this identity has become the basic principle of the type itself, this very contradiction plunges us with no mediating connections from the Finite into the Divine, and again from this latter into what is most transitory of all; and we live and move among *simulacra*, which rise up entirely as the growth of this alternating process, a kind of witches' world, where the definition of every shape eludes our grasp as we endeavor to seize it, is converted all at once into its opposite, or straddles away into mere inflated enormities.

The general modes under which Hindu art manifests itself may be summarized under the three following points of view:

(a) In the first place we find the full hugeness of the content of the Absolute is imposed by the imagination upon the *sensuous* in its aspect of singularity in such a way that this particular thing is itself, in its own form and station, taken completely to represent such a content and to exist as such for the imaginative sense. In the *Ramayana*, for example, the friend of Rama, namely, the prince of apes Hanuman, is a principal personage, and he accomplishes the bravest of exploits. And generally we may observe that among the Hindus the ape is revered as Divine, and we find, in fact, an entire city of apes. In the ape, as this point of singularity, the infinite content of the Absolute is envisaged and adored. It is just the same with the cow, Sabala, which in the *Ramayana* during the episodic treatment of the expiations of Vishvamitra, appears clothed with immeasurable power. If we take a glance on higher planes we find entire families in India—even though the individual here be merely a vacant and monotonously vegetating

life-unit—in whom the Absolute itself, as this concrete reality, is adored in its immediate life and presence as God. This same coincidence is found in Lamaism. Here, too, a single individual receives the highest worship due to the present God. In India, however, this honor is not exclusively paid to one man. Every Brahmin proves at once his claim from the day of his birth in his own caste to be ranked as Brahman, and possesses that second birth of the Spirit which identifies his humanity with God, in the way of Nature through his actual bodily birth, so that the crown of the most Divine itself is immediately referred back upon the entirely commonplace fact of physical existence. For although the Brahmin is under the most sacred obligation to read the Vedas, and attain by this means an insight into the secrets of Deity, this duty can be actually carried out in the most perfunctory way without detracting in the least from the Brahmin's own divinity. In a similar manner it is one of the modes most common to the representations of Hinduism to have the primordial God set forth as the procreator or begetter, as we find Eros is in the case of Greek mythology. This procreation as Divine activity is further worked into all kinds of representations in a wholly material way, and the private parts, both male and female, are treated as sacred in the highest sense. And in a reverse way, and to no less extent, the Divine, when it passes over in its independent Divinity to the plane of existing reality, is suffered in a wholly trivial manner to get mixed up with everyday details. We may take an example of this from the commencement of the *Ramayana*, where Brahma has come on a visit to Valmiki, the mythical bard of the *Ramayana*. Valmiki receives him entirely in the common Hindu fashion, pays him a compliment or two, places a stool before him, and supplies him with water and fruits. Brahma sits down just like anybody else and constrains his host to do likewise: and there they sit on and sit on until at last Brahma orders Valmiki to compose the poem of the *Ramayana*.

Modes of conception such as these are still not symbolic in the strict sense; for although we find that here, as the symbol requires, forms are taken from the material of sense and diverted to the use of conceptions of more universal import, we still find the further condition of this requirement wanting, namely, that the particular existences must not actually exist for sense-perception as this absolute significance, but merely suggest the same. For the Hindu imagination the ape, the cow, and the particular Brahmin are, not merely a cognate symbol of the



Divine, but are contemplated and represented as the Godhead itself, as existences adequate to that Godhead.

It is the contradiction inherent in this immediacy which is the motive force of another feature in the conceptions of Hindu art. For while, on the one hand, that which is absolutely severed from sense, the spiritual significance out and out, is conceived as the actually Divine, yet, on the other, the particular facts of concrete reality are immediately envisaged by the imagination, even in their sensuous existence, as Divine manifestations. They are no doubt partly only taken to represent particular aspects of the Absolute; but even so the particular thing in its immediacy is still incompatible with the universality, which it is, as adequate to the same, introduced to express; and it appears in all the more glaring contradiction to it for the reason that the significance is here already conceived in its universality, yet, despite of this, an express relation of identity is immediately set up by the imagination between it and the most particular of material facts.

(b) The most obvious way in which Hindu art endeavors to mitigate this disunion is, as we have already suggested, by the *measureless* extension of its images. Particular shapes are drawn out into colossal and grotesque proportions in order that they may, as forms of sense, attain to universality. The particular form of sense, which is taken to express not itself and its own characteristic meaning as a fact of external existence, but a universal significance which lies outside it, fails to satisfy the imagination until it has been torn out itself into vastness which knows neither measure nor limit. This is the cause of all that extravagant exaggeration of size, not merely in the case of spatial dimension, but also of measurelessness of time durations, or the reduplication of particular determinations, as in figures with many heads, arms, and so on, by means of which this art strains to compass the breadth and universality of the significance it assumes. The egg, for example, contains the bird within it. This particular fact is enlarged to the measureless conception of a world-egg secreting the universal life of all creation, and in which Brahma, the procreating God, accomplishes without effort the year of creation, until by virtue of his thought alone the two halves of the egg fall asunder. And, in addition to natural objects, human individuals and events are exalted that they may express the significance of truly Divine action in such a way that we can neither hold fast the Divine or the human in their independence, but both seem to run in a continual

confusion backwards and forwards into one another. As a striking illustration of such a mode of conception, we have the incarnations of certain Hindu gods, principally Vishnu, the conserver of life, whose exploits figure largely in the great epic poems. Rama is, for instance, himself the seventh incarnation of Vishnu (Ramachandra). From a review of particular demands, actions, circumstances, modes of appearance, and traits of demeanor, we are led to infer from these poems that this content is in great measure borrowed from actual events, that is from the exploits of ancient kings who exercised a powerful influence in creating new conditions of law and order; we find ourselves surrounded by a thoroughly human atmosphere and on the firm ground of reality. But then again, in a converse direction, the entire scene expands, reaches out into the nebulous, playing over and beyond it with universal conceptions, so that we lose the vantage ground we had gained and are robbed of all our bearings. We are treated in just the same way in the *Shakuntala*. At first we have set before us the most gentle and odorous realm of Love, in which everything goes on its way in an entirely human fashion; and then we are all at once snatched from the wealth of this genuine world, and transported into the clouds of the heaven of Indra, where everything suffers change, and our formerly circumscribed sphere is inflated to the measure of the universal import of Nature's life in its relation to the Brahmin and the power of Nature's gods, which is vouchsafed to man in return for his severe self-mortifications.

Such modes of representation are also not to be termed in a strict sense symbolical. That is to say the true symbol suffers the determinate shape, which it applies, to remain under that original definition, because its purpose is not to envisage therein the immediate existent of the significance in its universality, but to point to that import merely *through* the qualities of the object which are cognate to it. Hindu art, however, although it severs universality from the singular existing fact, still adds the further requirement that both sides shall be immediately united through the imagination, and is consequently forced to divest determinate existence of its specific limitations, and, albeit in a material fashion, to enlarge in the direction of indefiniteness and generally to change and reconstitute. In this melting down of all clear definition, and in the confusion which results from it, so that that form is always set down as highest for everything, whether phenomena, events, or actions, which in the mode of their figuration can neither for themselves assert

nor intrinsically possess and express any control over such content, we may rather seek for features analogous to the type of the *sublime* than see any illustration of real symbolism. For in the Sublime, as we shall see for ourselves further on, the finite phenomenon only expresses the Absolute, which it would prefigure for conscious sense to the extent that in so doing it escapes from the world of appearance, which fails to comprehend its content. This is just its treatment of eternity. Its idea of it is sublime when it has to be expressed in terms of time-duration, precisely through the emphasis it lays on the fact that no number, however great, is sufficient. In this strain runs the text: "A thousand years in Thy sight are even as a day." Hindu art contains much of the same or similar nature. It strikes the opening notes of "the Sublime" symphony. The main difference, however, between it and the true Sublimity consists in this, that the Hindu imagination does not in the wild exuberance of its images bring about the essential nothingness of the phenomena which it makes use of, but rather through just this very measurelessness and unlimited range of its visions believes that it has annihilated and made to vanish all difference and opposition between the Absolute and its mode of configuration. In this extreme type of exaggeration, then, there is ultimately little of real kinship with either true symbolism or Sublimity: it is equally remote from the true sphere of beauty. It offers us no doubt, more particularly in its more sober delineation of that which is exclusively human, much that is endearing and benign, many gracious pictures and tender emotions, the most splendid and seductive descriptions of Nature, the most childlike traits of Love and naive innocence, and withal much too that is magnanimous and noble; but, none the less, if we review it generally according to the fundamental import of all it expresses, we shall find that the spiritual is throughout rooted in sense, the meanest objects are placed on the same plane as the highest, true definition is wrecked, the Sublime is lowered to the conception of mere immeasurability, and that which is the original material of mythos for the most part vanishes before our eyes in the fantastic dreams of a restless and inquisitive imaginative power, and modes of shaping the same devoid of all intelligent purpose.

(c) In conclusion, the purest form of representation which we meet with at this stage of imaginative conception is that of *personification*, as it generally applies to the *human figure*. For the reason, however, that the significance on this plane is not as yet grasped as the free subjectivity of

Spirit, but rather either under a determination of abstract universality or as a mode of natural existence, one that contains, for example, the life of rivers, mountains, stars, or sun, for this reason it is only employed as means of expression for this kind of content under a mode which really detracts from the full worth of the human form. For the human body, if we view it in its true definition, no less than the form of human activities and events, expresses simply concrete Spirit and a spiritual content, which is self-contained and subsistent in this its reality, and possesses therewith no mere symbol or external sign.

From one point of view consequently this personification, albeit the significance, which it is invoked to represent, is taken to belong to the spiritual no less than the natural, yet, on account of the abstractness which clings to this form of significance, is on this stage of thought still of a superficial nature, and needs yet many other modes of representation to be rendered clear to the closer inspection, forms with which it is here confusedly mingled and thereby itself made obscure. And, moreover, taking it under another aspect, it is not the subjectivity here and its form which supplies the characterization, but rather its *expressions*, actions, and so forth; for it is in deed and action that the more defined line of severation first asserts itself, which can be brought into relation with the specific content of the universal significances. In that case, however, we are again face to face with the defect that it is not the conscious subject, but merely its *means of expression*, which supply the signification, no less than the confusion of thought, that events and deeds, instead of constituting the reality and the existence of the subject as determinately self-realized, preserve its content and significance elsewhere. A series of such actions is able therefore very possibly to carry with it a certain result and consequence, which is derived from the content which such a series subserves as its expression. This consequent result is, however, to an extent equally great, liable again to be interrupted and in part suspended by that which is central in the personification and the man, because subjective activity is also a stimulus to capricious action and its manifestation, so that both that which is significant and that which is destitute of this quality keep up their varied and irregular interplay just in so far as the imagination is unable to unite their significant characteristics and the forms which are appropriate to them in one substantial and secure mode of association. And, moreover, if it is the purely natural aspect of such facts which is exclusively accepted as the unified

content, in that case the material must inevitably prove itself inadequate to support the human form, just as this, being only fully adapted as a means of expressing Spirit, is on its side incapable of representing what is wholly natural. In all these respects such a mode of personification as the one we are examining fails to express a true mode; for the truth of art requires, as the truth universally requires, that there should be a complete concordance between the inward and the outward, that is, the notion and its reality. Greek mythology, for example, personified the Pontine sea; Scamander possesses its river gods, nymphs, dryads, and so forth. In other words it builds up Nature in the most various forms as the content of its human divinities. It does not, however, suffer its personification to remain purely formal and superficial, but creates thereby real individuals, in whom the purely natural significance fades into the background, and the human element, on the contrary, which has taken up and absorbed such material out of Nature, becomes the prominent factor. Hindu art, on the other hand, is unable to advance beyond a grotesque intermingling of these two sides of Nature and humanity, so that neither is treated according to its rightful claim, and both are merely given the forms which are appropriate to the other.

Speaking in a general way we cannot consider even these personifications to be as yet strictly symbolical, for the reason that owing to their formal superficiality they do not stand in any essential relation to or mode of association more truly intimate with the more determinate form which they are presumed to express. At the same time we may note here, with respect to other particular modifications and attributes, with which such personifications appear to be intermingled, and which are taken to express the more defined qualities generally attached to Divinities, an impulse in the direction of symbolic representation, for which the personification then stands merely as the universal type of widest connotation.

If we turn now to the more important examples of the imaginative sense on the plane we are now considering, we have first to draw attention to Trimurti, the triformed Godhead. This Deity includes in the first place *Brahma*, the activity which brings forth and procreates, the creator of the world, Lord of all the gods and much more beside. On the one hand he is to be kept distinct from Brahman (as Neuter), that is from the ultimate Being, and is the first-born of such. In another aspect, however, he again seems to fall into union with this abstract

Godhead, as generally happens with Hindu thought where the lines of difference are rarely held secure, and part are allowed to vanish and the rest simply to get confused with each other. The form with which he is most closely identified has much that is symbolical about it; he is formed with four heads and four hands, and with the latter are his scepter and ring. He is of a red color, an obvious suggestion of sunlight, since these Divinities invariably carry qualities which are of universal significance in Nature and which are thus personified in them. The *second* Deity of this triune Trimurti, is Vishnu, the preserving Godhead, the *third* Shiva, the destructive Power. The symbols employed to represent these gods are countless. For by reason of the universality of the significances they express they comprehend an infinite number of varied activities. In part these are related to particular phenomena of Nature, mainly the elementary, such as, for example, the quality of "fiery," which is an attribute of Vishnu, and frequently we have set before us shapes of the most antagonistic description.

In the conception of this triform god we have the fact at once brought home to us in the clearest way that the form of Spirit is not yet able to assert itself in its Truth if for no other reason than this, that here it is not the spiritual which constitutes the truly permeating significance. That is to say, this trinity of gods would only be Spirit if the third god were an essentially concrete unity, a unity which returned upon itself from the differentiation and reduplication of its substance. For God, according to the true conception of Godhead, is Spirit as this active and absolute self-differentiation and Unity, a conception which is generally what constitutes the notion of Spirit. In this Trimurti, however, the triune God is not by any means such a concrete totality, but merely a passage from this to that, a metamorphosis, a procreator, a destroyer, and so forth. We must be accordingly very careful not to imagine that we have discovered the highest Truth in these most primordial gropings of man's reason, and in this one note of concord which, no doubt, as mere rhythmic expression, contains the triune form of Deity, that is, the fundamental conception of Christian theology, believe that we already have before us a recognition of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Starting from such fundamental conceptions as those of Brahman and Trimurti, Hindu imagination expatiates still further without let in a countless number of the most varied formed Divinities. For those primary significances of universal application which are apprehended

as essential Deity are of such a kind that they may be rediscovered in an infinite number of phenomena, which are again personified and symbolized as gods, and each and all combine in throwing the greatest obstacles in the way of any intelligible system by reason of the indefinite character and confusing volubility of this type of imagination, which fails utterly to grasp the real nature of anything that it discovers, and merely wrests everything that it touches from its own appropriate sphere. For these gods of subordinate rank, at the head of which we may place such a Divinity as Indra, who represents the Air and the Heavens, the chief material is furnished by the general forces of Nature, such as stars, rivers, and mountains conceived in the various phases of their activity, their change, their influence on mankind, whether beneficent or hurtful, preservative or destructive. One of the most important subjects, however, of Hindu imagination and art is the origin of gods and the rest of creation, in other words its Theogony and Cosmogony. For this type of imagination is generally rooted in the continual effort to carry over that which is most removed from sense into the very heart of the external world, or in the reverse process once more to expunge that which stands nearest to sense and Nature by means of the barest abstraction. Consequently the origin of the gods is referred back to the primordial Godhead, and at the same time the workings and existence of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are represented as actual in mountains, streams, and human events. A cosmological content of this kind can, on the one hand, contain an independent and specific order of Deities, while on the other these gods are made to merge in those universal significances of the supremest type of Godhead. Such theogonies and cosmogonies are numerous and of every conceivable variety. When anyone ventures, therefore, to say that the Hindus have thus or thus portrayed the creation of the world or the origin of Nature, such a statement can only be taken to apply to a particular sect or book; you can very easily find a perfectly different account of these events elsewhere. The imagination of this people in the pictures and images they have created is exhaustless.

A mode of conception which is conspicuous throughout the entire series of these creation stories is the constantly repeated presentation of the creative act not in the form of *spiritual fiat*, but of a purely *natural* process of *generation*. Only after having made ourselves thoroughly conversant with this mode of imaginative vision shall we discover

the key to unlock the meaning of many representations which at first totally confound all our feelings of shame, shamelessness being here apparently driven to its furthest limits, and in its utter sensuousness carried beyond all belief. A striking example of this mode of imaginative treatment is offered us by the notoriously popular episode from the *Ramayana*, known as the descent of Ganga. This tale is narrated on the occasion when Rama happens by chance to come to the Ganges. The wintry and ice-covered Himavan, the prince of the mountains, was father by the slender Mena of two daughters, Ganga, the elder, and the beautiful Uma, the younger one. Certain gods, more particularly Indra, beseech the father to send them Ganga, in order that they may institute the sacred rites, and as Himavat proves himself quite ready to accede to their request Ganga mounts on high to the blessed gods. After this follows the further story of Uma, who after accomplishing wonderful actions of humility and penitence, is espoused to Rudra, that is, Shiva. From this union spring up wild and unfruitful mountains. For a hundred years long Shiva lay with Uma in the bridal embrace, without intermission, so that the gods aghast at the procreative power of Shiva, and full of anxiety for the productive child, beseech him that he will divert the stream of his strength on the Earth. This passage the English translator has not ventured to translate literally, for the reason that it flings too much for him every shred of shame or modesty to the winds. Shiva hearkens to the beseechings of the gods, and staying his former procreative ardor, that he may not utterly confound the universe, he loosens the seminal flood over the Earth. Out of this, transpierced with fire, rises up the white mountain which separates India from Tartary. Uma, however, falls into scorn and anger at this complaisance, and thereon curses all wedlock. In this section of the tale we have what are mainly fearful and distorted pictures which run so entirely counter to our ordinary notions of imagination and intelligent senses that the most we can do is to observe what they would appear to offer in default of either. Schlegel has omitted to translate this section of the episode and merely added in his own words how Ganga descends once more on the Earth. And this took place in the following way. A certain forebear of Rama, Sagara, was father of a bad son, and by a second wife he was father of no less than 60,000 sons, who came into the world in a pumpkin, were, however, raised up into stalwart men on clarified butter in pitchers. Now it chanced one day that Sagara was of



a mind to sacrifice a steed, which was, however, seized from him by Vishnu in the form of a serpent. On this Sagara sends forth his 60,000 sons. But no sooner had they come to Vishnu after great hardships and a long searching than a breath of hers burns them all to ashes. After a weary waiting a certain grandson of Sagara, by name Anshuman the Shining, son of Asamascha, set forth to find his 60,000 uncles and the sacrificial steed. He actually comes upon both the steed Shiva and the heap of ashes. The king of birds, Garuda, however, notifies to him the fact that unless the stream of the holy Ganga flows down from heaven over the heap of ashes his relations will be unable to return to life. Whereupon the stalwart Anshuman endures for 32,000 years on the mountain-top of Himavan the sternest mortifications. All in vain. Neither his own chastisements nor those of yet another 30,000 years of his son Dwilipa are of the slightest avail. At last the son of Dwilipa, the glorious Bhagiratha, succeeds in accomplishing the feat, but only after mortifications which last 1,000 years. Then the Ganga plunges down; but in order that the Earth may not thereby shiver in pieces, Shiva now bows his head so that the water runs into his mane. Thereupon yet further mortifications are enjoined upon Bhagiratha, in order that Ganga may be free to stream forth from these locks. Finally she is poured forth in six streams; the seventh Bhagiratha conducts after mighty privations to the place of the 60,000, who mount up to heaven, and therewith Bhagiratha rules for yet many a year over his people in peace.

Other theogonies such as the Scandinavian and the Greek are very similar in type to the Hindu. The principal feature of them all is this of physical generation and production; but not one of them plunges so headlong into the subject or in general displays such caprice and impropriety in the images of its invention as the Hindu. The theogony of Hesiod is in particular far more intelligible and succinct, so that at least one knows where one is, and is clear as to the general significance; and this is so because the impression is far more pronounced that the form and external embodiment of the myth is set forth by the narrator as something external. The mythos starts in this case with Chaos, Erebus, Eros, and Gaia. The Earth (Gaia) brings forth Uranos of her own accord, and then is mother by him of the mountains, sea, and so forth, also of Cronos and the Cyclops; Centimani, whom Uranos, however, shortly after birth incarcerates in Tartaros. Gaia thereupon induces

Cronos to castrate Uranos. The deed is accomplished. And from the blood that falls on the Earth spring to life the Erinnyes and the Giants. The castrated member is caught by the sea, and from the sea's foam arises, Cytherea. In all this description the outlines are more clearly and decisively drawn. And we are thereby carried beyond the circle of mere gods of Nature.

3. If we endeavor now to seize some point where the transition is emphasized to the stage of real symbolism, we shall find the same already in the first beginnings of Hindu imagination. That is to say, however preoccupied the Hindu imagination may be in its efforts to contort the sensuous phenomenon into a plurality of Divinities, a preoccupation which no other people has displayed with anything like the same exhaustless scope and countless transformations, yet from another point of view in many of its visions and narratives it remains throughout constant to that spiritual abstraction of a God supreme over all, in contrast with whom the particular, sensuous, and phenomenal is undivine, inadequate, and consequently is apprehended as something negative, something which has finally to be canceled. For, as we have from the first noticed, it is precisely this continual involution of one side on the other which constitutes the fundamental type of the Hindu imagination, and makes it for ever incapable of finding a true principle of reconciliation. The art is consequently never tired of representing, in every imaginable way, the surrender of the sensuous and the power of spiritual abstraction and self-absorption. Of this kind are the representations of toilsome mortifications and profound meditations, of which not merely the most ancient epical poems, such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, but also many other works of art furnish most important examples. No doubt many of these self-chastisements are undergone on grounds of ambition, or at least with a view to definite objects, which do conduct the devotee to the highest and most final union with Brahman, and to the mortification of everything carnal and finite. An object of this kind is the endeavor to secure the power of a Brahmin; but even in this there is always the fact present to consciousness that the expiation and the continuance of a meditation that is ever more and more diverted from the objects of sense will raise the devotee over his birth-place in a particular caste, no less than help him resist the power of Nature and the gods of Nature. For this reason, that prince of Divinities of this class, Indra, opposes most signally strenuous aspirants, and strives to entice

them away; or, in the case where all his seductions fail, he invokes assistance from the supreme gods lest the entire heaven fall into confusion.

In the representation of mortifications of this kind and the several kinds and grades according to which they are ranked, Hindu art is almost as fertile in its invention as in its system of Divinities, and it pursues the theme with the most thorough earnestness.

This, then, is the point from which we may now extend our survey in a forward direction.

### Real Symbolism

In the case of symbolical, no less than that of Fine Art, it is necessary that the significance which it seeks to embody should not merely be set forth, as is the case in Hindu art, from the first immediate unity of the same with its objective existence, such as obtains before any severation or distinction has as yet been emphasized, but that this significance should itself be independent and *free* from the *immediate* sensuous content. This deliverance can only so far assert itself as the sensuous and natural medium is both grasped and envisaged as itself essentially negative, as that which has to be and has been absorbed. It is a further requirement, moreover, that the negativity, which is successful in making its appearance as the passing off and the self-dissolution of the Natural, should be accepted and receive embodiment as the *absolute import* of the object generally, as a phase, that is to say, of the Divine. But with a fulfillment of such claims we are already beyond the limits of Hindu art. It is true that the consciousness of this negative side is not wholly absent from the Hindu imagination. Shiva is the destroyer no less than the producer. Indra dies, nay, more, the Destroyer Time, personified as Kala the terrible giant, confounds the entire universe and all gods, even Trimurti, who passes away at the same time in Brahman, just as the individual in his self-identification with the highest form of Divinity suffers his Ego and all his wisdom and will to vanish away. In these conceptions, however, the negative element is in part merely a transformation and change, in part only an abstraction, which allows all definition to drop away, in order that it may thrust its path to an indefinite and consequently vacuous and content-less universality. The substance of the divine on the other hand persists through change of form, passage over and advance to a system of many Deities, and

the abrogation of that system once more in the one highest form of God unalterably one and the same. It is not that conception of the one God, which itself essentially possesses, as this unity, the negative aspect as its own determination, both necessary and appropriate to its own essential notion [...]

### **The Pantheism of Art**

Anyone who makes use of the word pantheism nowadays exposes himself thereby to the grossest misunderstanding. For, to take but one aspect of the difficulty, this word "all" signifies generally in our modern acceptation of the term "all, and everything in its wholly empirical particularity." We have at once recalled to us, for example, this particular box with all its attributes, its specific color, size, form, and weight, or that particular house, book, animal, table, stool, oven, streak of cloud, and so on, to the end of the list. When we consequently find the charge advanced by not a few of our modern theologians against philosophy, that it makes a God of everything in general, it is quite obvious that, this "everything" is taken in the sense we have just adverted to, and this it is which is thus bodily thrust upon her shoulders. In one word the complaint which attaches to it is absolutely unwarranted. Such a conception of pantheism only exists in the heads of stupidity, and is not discoverable in any form of religion whatever, not even in those of the Iroquois and Eskimo, to say nothing of any philosophy. The "Everything" in what has been termed pantheism is therefore neither this nor that particular thing, but rather "Everything" in the sense of the "All," that is the One substantive essence, which no doubt is immanent in particular things, but is cognized in abstraction from their singularity and its empirical reality, so that it is not the particular as such, but the universal animating essence or soul, or to adopt a more popular way of speaking, it is the true and the excellent, both equally a real presence in this particular thing, which are here affirmed and indicated.

This it is which constitutes the real meaning of pantheism, and we shall only have occasion now to employ the expression in this sense. It applies first and foremost to the Orient, whose type of conception is based on the thought of an absolute unity of Godhead and of everything else as subsisting in this Unity. As such Unity and All the Divine can only be presented to consciousness by means of the ever recurrent

evanescence of the limited number of particular objects, in which its Presence is expressed. On the one hand we have here the Divine envisaged as immanent in the most diverse objects, whether it be life or death, mountain or sea, and with still closer intimacy no doubt as the most excellent and pre-eminent among and in all determinate existence. On the other hand, inasmuch as the One is this and again that other and that other beyond it, and in short is discharged into everything, all particular existence appears for that reason to be a thing which is canceled and vanishes, for no particular is alone this One, but this One is this manifold of particulars which pass away before semiperception, as such particulars into the universe which comprises them. For if the One is Life, it is also at another point Death, and is to that extent not merely life, so that it is neither as life nor the sun nor the sea that these or any other objective realities constitute the Divine and One. At the same time we do not find here, as in the genuine type of the Sublime, that the accidental is expressly posited in the negative relation of mere service. So far from this being so, substance is essentially identified with one particular and accidental existence, inasmuch as it is this One in everything. Conversely, however, this very particular, because it is equally subject to change, and the imagination does not restrict substance to one definite existence, but moves over every definition, letting it fall that it may advance to another, is thereby relegated in its turn to the accidental, over which the One is superposed in the sublimity thus conjoined with it.

Such a way of viewing existence therefore can only be expressed in art through *poetry*; the plastic arts are closed to it, inasmuch as they bring before the vision the definite and particular, which in their contrast to the substance present in the objects of Nature has to be given up in a determinate and persistent form. Where we find pantheism in its purity no plastic art is found as a mode of its presentation.

1. Once more we may adduce, as a first example of such pantheistic poetry, the literature of the Hindus, which along with its fantastic symbolism has also elaborated the type of art under discussion with distinction. In other words the Hindu race, as we have seen, proceed in their conceptions from the point of most abstract universality and unity, which is then carried forward to the specific shaping of gods such as Trimurti, Indra, and the rest. This process of definition, however, is not adhered to with constancy; but to a like extent is suffered once more to break up, so that we find inferior gods are absorbed in superior gods,

and the highest of all in Brahman. From this it is sufficiently obvious that this Universal constitutes the one persistent and unalterable basis of all. And if, as we freely admit, the Hindus evince the twofold impulse in their poetry, namely, either to exaggerate the particular existence, in order that it may appear to the senses compatible with the significance of the Absolute, or, in the converse case, to suffer every form of definition to pass as mere negation when contrasted with the one abstraction of Being, yet at the same time there is another aspect of their literature, in which we also find artistic representation under the purer mode of imaginative pantheism we have just described, a mode in which the immanence of the Divine is exalted above all particular existence in which it is presented to sense and which as such disappears. We may no doubt be rather inclined to recognize in this later mode of conception a certain similarity with that type of the immediate unity of pure thought which we found to be characteristic of the religious consciousness of the Parsees. Among the Parsees, however, the One and Excellent is conserved in its independence as itself a fact of Nature, that is, Light. With the Hindus, on the contrary, the One, or Brahman, is merely the formless One; and this it is which in its transformations through the infinite variety of the phenomenal world, first gives rise to the pantheistic mode of representation. So we read of *Krishna* (*Bhagavad-Gita*, Lect. VII, 11.4 *et seq.*): "Earth, water and wind, air and fire, reason and egoity are the eight pieces of my essential force; yet knowest thou somewhat more in me, a more exalted essence, which animates the earthly and supports the world. In it all existences have their origin. Ay, verily, thou knowest I am the origin of the entire universe as also its annihilation. Aught higher than myself is not; in me is this All conjoined together, as a chaplet of pearls on a thread. I am the taste of sweetness in all that flows; I am the splendor in the sun and moon, the mystic Word in the sacred writings, manhood in man, the clean savor in the Earth, brightness in flame, in all Being Life, meditation in all who repent. In that which has Life the Power of Life, in the wise Wisdom, in the glorious Glory. Everything that is true of its kind, and everything that is specious and obscure proceeds out of me. I am not in them, but they are in me. Through the illusion of these three qualities all the world is made foolish, and knows me not who am unalterable. Moreover also the Divine illusion, even Maya, is my own illusion, which is hard indeed to surpass, albeit all who follow after me step over this illusion." In this passage we

have indicated in the most striking terms just such a substantive unity as the one above discussed, not merely from the point of view of its immanence in immediate sense, but also from that of its advance beyond and over all singularity.

In a similar manner *Krishna* affirms of himself that He is the most Excellent among all the different forms of existence (Lect. X, 2I): "Among the stars I am the radiant sun, among the human signs the moon, among the sacred Books the Book of Hymns, among the senses the spiritual, Meru among the tops of the mountains, the lion among animals, the vowel A among all letters, among the seasons of the year the blooming spring time, etc."

This enumeration, however, of superlative excellence, and we may add the description of that which is merely a change of forms, among which it is always one and the same thing that is envisaged, despite any superficial appearance such may give us at first of a prodigal imagination, is none the less, by reason of this very equality of content, extremely monotonous and in general empty and tedious.

## Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion\*

### **The Religion of Imagination or Fantasy**

#### **Its Conception**

The second of the main forms of Pantheism, when this latter actually appears as religion, is still within the sphere of this same principle of the One substantial Power, in which all that we see around us, and even the freedom of man itself, has merely a negative, accidental character. We saw that the substantial Power, in its first form, comes to be known as representing the multitude of essential determinations, and the entire sphere of these, and not as being in its own self spiritual. And now the question immediately arises as to how this Power is itself determined, and what is its content? Self-consciousness in religion cannot,

\* From *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. E. B. Speirs and J. B. Sanderson, vol. 2, 3 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1895); Part II: "Definite Religion": Section II: "The Division of Consciousness within Itself": 2. "The Religion of Imagination or Phantasy", pp. 1-47; Section III: "Natural Religion in Transition to the Religion of Freedom", pp. 65-77; 3. "Religion of Mystery", pp. 85-100.



like the abstract thinking understanding, limit itself to the idea of that Power known only as an aggregate of determinations which merely are. In this way the Power is not as yet known as real, as independently existing unity; not as yet as a Principle. Now the opposite form of this determination is the taking back of the manifold determinateness of existence into the unity of inner self-determination. This concentration of self-determination contains the beginning of Spirituality.

i. The Universal, as determining its own self, and not merely as a multitude of rules, is Thought, exists as Thought. It is in our thoughts alone that Nature, the ruling Power which brings forth everything, exists as the Universal, as this One Essence, as this One Power which exists for itself. What we have before us in Nature is this Universal, but not *as* a Universal. It is in our thought that the truth of Nature is brought into prominence on its own account as Idea, or more abstractly as something having a universal character. Universality is, however, in its very nature Thought, and as self-determining is the source of all determination. But at the stage at which we now are, and where the Universal appears for the first time as the determining agent, as a Principle, it is not as yet Spirit, but abstract Universality generally. The Universal being known in this way as Thought, it remains as such shut up within itself. It is the source of all power, but does not externalize or make itself manifest as such.

ii. Now to Spirit belongs the power of differentiation and the full development of the difference. Of the system of this complete development, the concrete unfolding of Thought on its own account, and that particular unfolding which as manifestation or appearance is Nature and the spiritual world, form an inherent part. Since, however, the Principle which makes its appearance at the present stage has not as yet got so far as to permit of this unfolding taking place within that principle itself, it being rather held fast in simple abstract concentration only, the unfolding, the fullness of the actual Idea, is found outside of the Principle, and consequently differentiation and manifoldness are abandoned to the wildest, most outward forms of imagination. The specialization of the Universal manifests itself in a multitude of independent powers.

iii. This multiplicity, this wild abandonment, is once more taken back into the original unity. This taking back, this concentration of thought, would complete the moment of spirituality so far as the Idea is concerned, if the original universal thought resolved within its own self upon differentiation, and if it were known as essentially this act of

taking back. Upon the basis of abstract thought, however, the taking back itself remains a process devoid of Spirit. There is nothing wanting here, so far as the moments of the Idea of Spirit are concerned, the Idea of rationality is present in this advance. But yet those moments do not constitute Spirit; the unfolding does not give itself the perfect form of Spirit, because the determinations remain merely universal. There is merely a continual return to that Universality which is self-active, but which is held fast in the abstraction of self-determination. We have thus the abstract One and the wildness of extravagant imagination, which, it is true, is recognized in turn as remaining in identity with what is primary, but is not expanded into the concrete unity of the Spiritual. The unity of the intelligible realm reaches the condition of particular independent existence; this last does not, however, become absolutely free, but remains confined within universal Substance.

But just because the unfolding does not as yet return in a true way into the Notion, is not as yet taken back into the Notion by its own inner action, it still retains its immediacy in spite of that return, still belongs to natural religion, and therefore the moments fall apart, and are kept independent and separate relatively to one another. This is the curse of nature. Everywhere we shall find tones that accord with the Notion, with the True, which, however, become the more horrible in the strain as a whole because they continue to retain the character of separateness or mutual exclusion, and because the moments, being independent and objective in their particularity, are looked upon theoretically.

The further question which now presents itself is: What are the forms, the shapes in which this independence appears? We are actually in such a world, consciousness finds itself in an existing world, of such a mutually exclusive character—in a world of sense, and thus has to deal with a world of many-colored manifoldness. Taking it as a whole, it is thus just “these,” these individual things; that is the fundamental determination here. We call “these,” Things, and this is the more precise characteristic we assign to the Objective, and by which we distinguish it from Spirit. In a similar way we have in inner life to do with manifold forces, spiritual distinctions and experiences, which the understanding in like manner isolates; as, for example, this inclination, that passion, this power of memory, that power of judgment, etc. In thinking, too, we have determinations each of which exists for itself, such as positive, negative, being, not-being; this, for

our consciousness, which takes things in their sensuous aspect, for our understanding, is independence. In this way we have a view or theory of the universe which is of a prosaic character, because the independence has the form of what is a thing, of forces, faculties of the mind, etc., and consequently its form is abstract. The thought is not Reason here, but Understanding, and is present in that form. But when we so regard the world, what we have is the reflection of understanding, which appears much later, and cannot as yet exist here. Not until prose, not until thinking, has permeated all relations, so that man everywhere assumes the attitude of one who thinks abstractly, does he speak of external things. The thinking in question here is, on the contrary, this Substance only; it is merely this self-containedness or being at home with self; it is not as yet brought into exercise, not applied thought, and has not as yet permeated the entire man. The special Powers, which are partly objects, such as the sun, mountains, rivers, or else are more abstract ideas, such as origination, decay, change, assumption of form, and the like, are not as yet taken up into Spirit, are not as yet truly posited as ideal, and yet at the same time, too, are not as yet intelligently distinguished by the understanding from Spirit, and pure Being is still concentrated in that undeveloped state of Substance which is not as yet spiritual Substance.

Now we do not only say things "are," but we add in the second place that they stand in manifold relation to one another; they have causal connection, they are dependent on one another: this second moment of the action of understanding cannot be present here. It is the understanding only as pure self-identity, or as a self-consistent process, which conceives of objects under these categories. "Since the one is, therefore the other is," is its way of speaking; and without once turning back, it carries this chain of connection continuously on into the bad or false infinite. Thus the independence we are speaking of has not this form. The form of independence which is present here is no other than the form of that which is the form of concrete self-consciousness itself, and this first mode is therefore the human or animal mode. At this stage there is a filling-up; the concrete makes its appearance as existent, as something which is actually perceived, no longer as Power. In this last the Concrete is posited as merely negative, as in subjection to the Power; it is only the practical element which is objective in the Power, not the theoretical. Here, on the contrary, the theoretical element is set free.

Spirit, as being theoretical, has a double aspect. It relates itself as within itself to itself, and it relates itself to the Things, which "things" are for it universal independence. Thus for Spirit the things themselves break up into their immediate external varied form on the one hand, and into their free independently existing Essence on the other. Since this is not as yet a Thing, nor represents, in fact, the categories of the Understanding, and is not abstract independence produced by thought, it is the free independence of ordinary conception; and this is the idea formed of man, or at least of what has life, which consequently may be, in a general sense, called the Objectivity of Imagination. In order to conceive of the sun, the sky, a tree as existing, as self-sustained, it is only necessary for us to have a sensuous picture or image of it, to which nothing which appears heterogeneous has to be added in order that it may be thus presented to us as self-sustained or independent. But show or semblance is a deception. The image, when represented to us as independent, as having Being, and when regarded by us as such, has for us just the character of Being, of a force, of a causality, of a form of activity, of a soul; it is in these categories that it has its independence. But in so far as the independence has not as yet advanced to the prose of Understanding, for which the category of force or of cause is the characteristic quality of objectivity generally, the apprehension and expression of that independence is this poetry, which makes the idea of human nature and outward form the supporting basis and Essence of the external world, or, it may be, even animal form, or the human form in combination with the animal. This poetry is, in fact, the rational element in imagination, for this rational element is to be kept firm hold of, although consciousness, as before stated, has not yet advanced to the category, and thus the element of independence is to be taken out of the world which is around us, and, in fact, in direct contrast to what is not independent, to what is conceived as external. And here it is animal and human existence alone which is the form, mode, and nature of what is free among things. The sun, the sea, a tree, and the like, are, as a matter of fact, without independence as compared with what lives and is free; and it is these forms of independence which in this element of independent existence constitute the supports of the category for any content at all. A subjective soul is thus given to Matter, which, however, is not a category, but is concrete Spirituality and Life.

The immediate result is that as soon as objects generally and universal thought-determinations have this free independence, that connection of things in the world which is the work of understanding is dissolved; it is the categories of the relations of necessity, or the dependence of things upon one another in accordance with their quality, their essential definite character, which form this connection; all these categories, however, are absent, and thus nature, with nothing to support or give it stability, reels at the mercy of imagination. There may be any sort of unregulated fancy, any kind of chance occurrence and result; the movement in connection with any condition of things is not bound and limited by anything whatever; the whole splendor of nature and of imagination is available as a means of decorating the content, and the caprice of imagination has absolutely unbounded scope, and can follow whatever direction it pleases.

Passion in its natural untrained state possesses but few interests, and that in which it has an interest it negates, while on the other hand it pays no attention to whatever is void of interest. From this standpoint of imagination, however, all distinctions are taken special notice of and firmly clung to, and everything which has an interest for imagination becomes free, independent, and is exalted to the rank of fundamental thought.

But it is likewise owing to this very imagined independence itself that conversely the peculiar position of the content and of the definite outward forms disappears; for since they have a definite finite content, they would properly have their objective support, their return and abiding renewal, only in that connection of the understanding which has vanished, and by means of which their independence, instead of being a reality, becomes rather a complete contingency. The phenomenal world, the world of appearance, is therefore drawn into the service of imagination. The divine world is a realm of imagination, which becomes all the more infinite and manifold as it has its home in a region where Nature is exuberant; and this principle of passionless imagination, of a fancy built on a theoretical foundation, has enriched the character of the mind and its emotions—emotions which in this gently hatching warmth are permeated in a pre-eminent degree by a strain of voluptuous and sweet loveliness, but at the same time of feeble softness.

The objective content, too, is not apprehended here in the form of Beauty; those powers, whether general natural objects or the forces

of individual feeling, as, for example, love, are not as yet embodied in forms of beauty. To beauty of form belongs free subjectivity, which in the sensuous world and in concrete existence is both free and knows itself to be so.

For the Beautiful is essentially the Spiritual making itself known sensuously, presenting itself in sensuous concrete existence, but in such a manner that that existence is wholly and entirely permeated by the Spiritual, so that the sensuous is not independent, but has its meaning solely and exclusively in the Spiritual and through the Spiritual, and exhibits not itself, but the Spiritual.

Such is true beauty. In living human beings there are many external influences which check pure idealization, this subsumption of the bodily sensuous element under the Spiritual.

Here this condition does not as yet exist, and for this reason, that the Spiritual is as yet only present in this abstract shape of Substantiality. It is, indeed, unfolded into these particular forms, into special Powers, but the substantiality still exists for itself; it has not permeated and overcome these its particular shapes, this sensuous concrete existence.

Substance is, so to speak, an universal space which has not as yet organized, idealized, and brought under it that with which it is filled up—the particularization which issued from it.

For this reason, too, the form of beauty cannot be created here, because the content—these particularizations of Substance—is not as yet the true content of Spirit.

Since, then, the limited content is the foundation, and is known as spiritual, the subject—this definite spiritual agent—becomes, owing to this, an empty form. In the Religion of Beauty, the Spiritual, as such, constitutes the foundation, so that the content, too, is the spiritual content. In that religion, statues or pictures, as sensuous matter, are merely the expression of the Spiritual. Here, however, the content is not of a spiritual kind.

Thus, the art we find here is symbolical art, which does indeed express essential characteristics, but not characteristics of the Spiritual. Hence the unbeautiful, the mad, the fantastic character of the art which makes its appearance here. The symbolism is not the purely Beautiful, just because a content other than spiritual individuality is the basis. Free subjectivity is not the permeating element, and is not essentially expressed by the form. In this fantasy there is nothing fixed,

nothing molds itself into forms of the beauty which is given only by the consciousness of freedom. Speaking generally, what we have here is complete dissolution of form, the restless movement, the manifestation of the self-importance of the individual. Devoid of anything to give it stability, the inner element passes over into external existence, and the unfolding of the Absolute—a process which outdoes itself in this world of imagination—is merely an endless breaking-up of the One into the Many, and an unstable reeling to and fro of all content.

It is the system of universal fundamental determinations, the system determined in and for itself through the Notion, as that of the absolute sovereign powers to which everything returns, and which permeate everything through and through, which alone brings thorough stability into this region of caprice, confusion, and feebleness, into this measureless splendor and enervation. And it is the study of this system which is of the most essential moment. On the one hand, we have to recognize the presence of these determinations through the perverted sensuous form of the capricious, externally determined embodiment, and to do justice to the essential element which lies at their foundation; and on the other hand, we have to observe the degradation which they undergo. This degradation is partly owing to the mode in which the indifference of those determinations toward one another appears, partly owing to the presence of arbitrary human and externally local sense experience, through which they are transposed into the sphere of the every-day life, where all passions, local features—features of individual recollection—are joined on to them. There is no act of judgment, no feeling of shame, nothing of the higher mutual fitness of form and of content; the every-day existence as such is not made to vanish, and is not developed into beauty. The inequality or disproportion of form and content consists, more strictly speaking, in this that the fundamental determinations are debased, inasmuch as they acquire the semblance of being similar to the disconnected facts of existence, and that conversely the external sensuous representation becomes depraved by means of its form.

From what has now been stated it will be already clear that these determinations of the divine Essence have their existence in the Indian religion. We have here to look away from its vast and characteristically endless mythology and mythological forms, in order to keep to the principal fundamental determinations alone, which are on the one hand

baroque and wild, and are horrible, repulsive, loathsome distortions, but at the same time prove themselves to have the Notion for their inner source; while in virtue of the development which it gets in this theoretical region, they recall the highest element of the Idea. At the same time, however, they express that definite stuntedness under which the Idea suffers when these fundamental determinations are not brought back again into their spiritual nature.

What constitutes the principal point of interest in this religion of India is the development or explication of form in contrast with an abstract monotheistic religion, and so too with the Greek religion—that is to say, in contrast with a religion which has spiritual individuality as its principle.

### The General Idea of the Objective Content of This Stage

What is the first in the Notion, what is true, the universal substantial element, is the eternal repose of Being-within-itself; this Essence existing within itself, which universal Substance is. This simple Substance, which the Hindus call Brahma, is regarded as the Universal, the self-existing Power; which is not, like passion, turned toward what is other than itself, but is the quiet, luster-less reflection into itself, which is, however, at the same time determined as Power. This abidingly self-enclosed Power in the form of Universality must be distinguished from its operation, from that which is posited by means of it, and from its own moments. Power is the Ideal, the Negative, for which all else exists merely as abrogated, as negated. But the Power, as that which exists within itself, as universal Power, distinguishes itself from its moments themselves, and these therefore appear on the one hand as independent beings, and on the other as moments which even perish in the One. They belong to it, they are merely moments of it, but as differentiated moments they come forward into independent existence, and present themselves as independent Persons—Persons of the Godhead who are God, who are the Whole itself, so that that primary element vanishes in this particular shape or form, but on the other hand they again vanish in the one Power. The alternations—according to which we have now the One, now the distinction as entire totality—are the perplexing inconsistencies which present



themselves in this sphere to the logical understanding, but they are at the same time that consistency of reason which is in accordance with the Notion, as contrasted with the consistency of the abstract self-identical understanding.

Subjectivity is Power in itself, as the relation of infinite negativity to itself; it is not, however, only potentially power, but rather it is with the appearance of subjectivity that God is for the first time posited as Power. These determinations are indeed to be distinguished from one another, and stand in relation to the subsequent conceptions of God, and are also of primary importance to the understanding of the preceding ones. They are therefore to be considered more closely.

Power, in fact, at once in religion in the general sense, and in the wholly immediate and crudest religion of nature, is the fundamental determination, as being the infinitude which the finite as abrogated posits within itself. And in so far as this is conceived of as outside of it, as existing at all, it nevertheless comes to be posited merely as something which has proceeded out of that finite as its basis. Now the determination which is all-important here is, that this Power is, to begin with, posited simply as the basis of the particular shapes or existing forms, and the relation to the basis of the inherently existing Essence is the relation of Substantiality. Thus it is merely power potentially—power as the inner element of the existence; and as Essence which has Being within itself or as Substance, it is only posited as the Simple and Abstract, so that the determinations or differentiations as forms existing in their own right are conceived of as outside of it. This Essence, which exists within itself, may indeed be conceived of too as existing for itself, as Brahma is self-thinking. Brahma is the universal Soul; when he creates, he himself issues as a breath out of himself; he contemplates himself, and exists then for himself.

But his abstract simplicity does not at once vanish owing to this, for the moments, the universality of Brahma as such, and the "I" for which that universality exists, these two are not determined as contrasted with one another, and their relation is therefore itself simple. Brahma exists thus as abstractly existing for himself. The Power and the basis of existences and all things have, in fact, proceeded out of him and vanished in him. In saying to himself, "I am Brahma," all things have vanished back into him, have vanished in him. Whether as outside of him, existing independently, or within him, they have

vanished; there is only the relation of these two extremes. But posited as differentiated determinations, they appear as independent existences outside of him, since he is primarily abstract, and not concrete in himself.

The Power posited in this manner potentially only works inwardly without showing itself as activity. I manifest myself as power in so far as I am cause and determine, in so far as I am a subject, when I throw a stone, and so forth. But this potentially existing Power works in a universal manner, without this universality being a subject for itself, a self-conscious subject. These universal modes of working, understood in their true character, are, for instance, the Laws of Nature.

Now Brahma, as the one, simple, absolute Substance, is the neuter, or, as we say, the Godhead: Brahma expresses this universal Essence more as a Person, as a subject. But this is a distinction which is not constantly made use of, and in the different grammatical cases this distinction already spontaneously effaces itself, for the masculine and neuter genders have many cases which are similar. In another respect, too, no great emphasis is to be laid upon this distinction, because Brahma as personified is merely superficially personified in such a manner that the content still remains this simple substance.

And now distinctions appear in this simple Substance, and it is worth noting that these distinctions present themselves in such a way that they are determined in accordance with the instinct of the Notion. The First is totality generally as One, taken quite abstractly; the Second is determinateness, differentiation generally; and the Third, in accordance with the true determination, is that the differences are led back again into unity, into concrete unity.

Conceived of in accordance with its abstract form, this Trinity of the Absolute is, when it is formless, merely Brahma,—that is, empty Essence. From the point of view of its determinations it is a Three, but in a unity only, so that this threeness is merely a unity.

If we define this more accurately and speak of it under another form, the Second means that differentiations, different Powers exist: the differentiation, however, has no rights as against the one Substance, the absolute unity; and in so far as it has no rights it may be called eternal goodness, implying that what has determinate character, this manifestation of the Divine,—should indeed exist; that differentiation too should attain to this, that it is. This is the goodness through which

what is posited by the Power as a semblance or show of Being acquires momentary Being. In the Power it is absorbed, yet goodness permits it to exist independently.

Upon this Second follows the Third—that is, righteousness, implying that the existing determinate element is not, that the finite attains to its end, its destiny, its right, which is to be changed, to be transformed, in fact, into another determinateness; this is righteousness in the general sense. To this, in an abstract way, belong becoming, perishing, originating; for Not-being too has no right; it is an abstract determination in contrast to Being, and is itself the passing over into unity.

This totality, which is the unity, a Whole, is what is called among the Indians *Tri murti*—*murti* = form or shape—all emanations of the Absolute being called *murti*. It is this Highest, differentiated within itself in such a manner that it has these three determinations within itself.

The most striking and the greatest feature in Indian mythology is unquestionably this Trinity in unity. We cannot call this Trinity Persons, for it is wanting in spiritual subjectivity as a fundamental determination. But to Europeans it must have been in the highest degree astonishing to meet with this principle of the Christian religion here: we shall become acquainted with it in its true form later on, and shall see that Spirit as concrete must necessarily be conceived of as triune.

The First, then, the One, the One Substance, is what is called Brahma. Parabrahma, which is above Brahma, also makes its appearance; and these are jumbled together. Of Brahma, in so far as he is a subject, all kinds of stories are related. Thought, reflection, at once goes beyond such a determination as Brahma, since one having such a definite character is conceived of as One of these Three, makes itself a Higher, which gives itself a definite character in the distinction. In so far as that which is absolute Substance again appears as merely One alongside of others, Parabrahma is expressive of the need of thought to have something yet higher; and it is impossible to say in what definite relation forms of this kind stand to one another.

Brahma is thus what is conceived of as this Substance out of which everything has proceeded and is begotten, as this Power which has created All. But while the one Substance—the One—is thus the abstract Power, it at the same time appears as the inert element, as formless, inert matter; here we have specially the forming activity, as we should express it.

The one Substance, because it is only the One, is the Formless: thus this, too, is a mode in which it becomes apparent that substantiality does not satisfy; that is to say, it fails to do so because form is not present.

Thus Brahma, the one self-identical Essence, appears as the Inert, as that which indeed begets, but which at the same time maintains a passive attitude—like woman, as it were. Krishna therefore says of Brahma, "Brahma is my uterus, the mere recipient in which I lay my seed, and out of which I beget All." In the determination, too, "God is Essence," there is not the principle of movement, of production; there is no activity.

Out of Brahma issues everything,—gods, the world, mankind; but it at once becomes apparent that this One is inactive. In the various cosmogonies or descriptions of the creation of the world, what has just been thus indicated makes its appearance.

Such a description of the creation of the world occurs in the Vedas. In these Brahma is represented as being thus alone in solitude, and as existing wholly for himself, and a Being which is represented as a higher one then says to him that he ought to expand and to beget himself. But Brahma, it is added, had not during a thousand years been in a condition to conceive of his expansion, and had returned again into himself.

Here Brahma is represented as world-creating, but, owing to the fact that he is the One, as inactive, as one who is summoned by another higher than himself, and is formless. Thus the need of another is directly present. To speak generally, Brahma is this one absolute Substance.

Power as this simple activity is Thought. In the Indian religion this characteristic is the most prominent one of all; it is the absolute basis and is the One—Brahma. This form is in accordance with the logical development. First came the multiplicity of determinations, and the advance consists in the resumption of determination into unity. That is the basis. What now remains to be given is partly something of a merely historical character, but partly, too, the necessary development which follows from that principle.

Simple Power, as the active element, created the world. The creating is essentially an attitude of thought towards itself, an activity relating itself to itself, and in no sense a finite activity. This, too, is expressed in the ideas of the Indian religion. The Hindus have a great

number of cosmogonies which are all more or less barbarous, and out of which nothing of a fixed character can be derived. What we have is not one idea of the creation of the world, as in the Jewish and Christian religion. In the Code of Manu, in the Vedas and Puranas, the cosmogonies are constantly understood and presented differently. Notwithstanding this, there is always one feature essentially present in them, namely, that this Thought, which is at home with itself or self-contained, is the begetting of itself.

This infinitely profound and true trait constantly reappears in the various descriptions of the creation of the world. The Code of Manu begins thus: "The Eternal with one thought created water," and so on. We also find that this pure activity is called "the Word," as God is in the New Testament. With the Jews of later times—Philo, for example—*sophia* is the "First-created," which proceeds out of the One. The "Word" is held in very high esteem among the Hindus. It is the figure of pure activity, definite existence of an externally physical character, which, however, does not permanently remain, but is only ideal, and immediately vanishes in its external form. The Eternal created the water, it is stated, and deposited fruit-bringing seed in it; this seed became a resplendent egg, and therein the Eternal itself was born again as Brahma. Brahma is the progenitor of all spirits, of the existent and non-existent. In this egg, it is said, the great Power remained inactive for a year; at the end of that time it divided the egg by means of thought, and created one part masculine and the other feminine. The masculine energy is itself begotten, and becomes again begetting and active, only when it has practiced severe meditation, that is to say, when it has attained to the concentration of abstraction. Thought is therefore what brings forth and what is brought forth; it is the bringer forth itself, namely, the unity of thinking with itself. The return of thinking to itself is found in other descriptions besides. In one of the Vedas, some passages out of which Colebrooke was the first to translate, a similar description of the first act of creation is to be found:

There was neither Being nor nothing, neither above nor below, neither death nor immortality, but only the One enshrouded and dark. Outside of this One existed nothing, and this brooded in solitude with itself; through the energy of contemplation it brought forth a world out of itself; in thinking, desire, impulse first formed itself, and this was the original seed of all things.

Here likewise Thought in its self-enclosed activity is presented to us. But Thought becomes further known as Thought in the self-conscious Essence—in man, who represents its actual existence. The Hindus might be charged with having attributed to the One a contingent existence, since it is left to chance whether or not the individual raises itself to the abstract Universal—to abstract self-consciousness. But, on the other hand, the caste of the Brahmans is an immediate representation of the presence of Brahma; it is the duty of that caste to read the Vedas, to withdraw itself into itself. The reading of Vedas is the Divine, indeed God Himself, and so too is prayer. The Vedas may even be read unintelligently and in complete stupefaction; this stupefaction itself is the abstract unity of thought; the “I,” the pure contemplation of it is perfect emptiness. Thus it is in the Brahmans that Brahma exists; by the reading of the Vedas Brahma is, and human self-consciousness in the state of abstraction is Brahma itself.

The characteristics of Brahma which have been indicated seem to have so many points of correspondence with the God of other religions—with the true God Himself—that it appears to be of some importance to point out, on the one hand, the difference which exists, and on the other, to indicate for what reason the logical determination of subjective existence in self-consciousness which marks the Indian pure Essence has no place among these other ideas. The Jewish God is, for example, the same One, immaterial Substantiality and Power which exists for thought only; He is Himself objective thought, and is also not as yet that inherently concrete One which He is as Spirit. But the Indian supreme God is merely the One in a neuter sense, rather than the One Person; He has merely potential being, and is not self-conscious; He is Brahma the *Neutrum*, or the Universal determination. Brahma as subject, on the other hand, is at once one among the three Persons, if we may so designate them, which in truth is not possible since spiritual subjectivity as an essential fundamental determination is wanting to them. It is not enough that the Trimurti proceeds out of that primal One, and also returns back again into that One; all that is implied in this is that it is represented merely as Substance, not as Subject. The Jewish God, on the contrary, is the One exclusively, who has no other gods beside Him. It is because of this that He is determined not only as Potentiality, but also as what alone has Actual Being, as the absolutely consuming or absorbing element, as a Subject

having infinitude within itself, which is indeed still abstract and posited in an undeveloped manner, but which is nevertheless true infinitude. His goodness and His righteousness remain so far also merely attributes; or, as the Hebrews frequently express it, they are His names, which do not become special forms or shapes, although too they do not become the content through which the Christian Unity of God is alone the spiritual one. For this reason the Jewish God cannot acquire the determination of a subjective existence in self-consciousness, because He is rather a subject in Himself. To reach subjectivity He does not therefore require an Other in which He should for the first time acquire this determination, but which, because of its being in an Other, would have a merely subjective existence also.

On the other hand, what the Hindu says in and to himself—"I am Brahma"—must be recognized, in its essential character, as identical with the modern subjective and objective "vanity"—with that which the "I" is made into by means of the oft-repeated assertion that we know nothing of God. For the statement that "I" has no affirmative relation to God, that He is a "Beyond" for the "I," a nullity without any content, at once implies that the mere independent "I" is the affirmative for "I." It is of no use to say, "I recognize God as above me, as outside of me"; God is an idea without content, whose sole characteristic, all that is to be recognized or known of it, all which it is to be for me, is wholly and entirely limited to this—that this absolutely indeterminate Being is, and that it is the negative of myself. In the Indian, "I am Brahma," it is not, indeed, posited as the negative of myself, as being in opposition to me. But that apparently affirmative determination of God—that He is—is partly in itself merely the perfectly empty abstraction of Being, and therefore a subjective determination only, a determination which has an existence in my self-consciousness only, and which therefore attaches to Brahma also, and partly in so far as it still is to get an objective meaning, it would already be—and not in concrete determinations only, as, for instance, that God is a subject in and for Himself—something which is known of God, a category of Him, and thus would be already too much. Being, consequently, reduces itself by its own act to the mere "something outside of me," and it is intended expressly, too, to signify the negative of myself, in which negation nothing in fact remains to me but I myself. It is thrashing empty straw to attempt to pass off that negative of myself, that something outside of me or above me, for an alleged, or at least a

supposed, recognized objectivity, for to do so is merely to pronounce a negative, and to do this, in fact, expressly through myself. But neither this abstract negation, nor the quality that it is posited through me, and that I know this negation, and know it as negation only, is an objectivity; nor is it an objectivity, so far, at least, as the form is concerned, even although it is not an objectivity so far as the content is concerned; for the truth rather is, that is just the empty form of objectivity without content, an empty form and merely subjective supposition. Formerly that which could be described as merely the negative, was called in the Christian world the Devil. Consequently nothing affirmative remains save this subjectively-supposing "I." With a one-sided dialectic it has, by a process of evaporation, skeptically rid itself of all the content of the sensuous and super-sensuous world, and given to it the character of something that is negative for it. All objectivity having become for it vain and empty, what is present is this positive vanity itself—it is that objective "I" which alone is Power and Essence, in which everything has vanished away, into which all content whatever has sunk as finite, so that the "I" is the Universal, the master of all determinations, and the exclusive, affirmative point.

The Indian "I am Brahma," and that so-called religion, the "I" of the modern faith of reflection, differ from one another in their external relations only; the former expresses the primitive apprehension of the mind in its naive form, in which the pure substantiality of its thought comes into existence for self-consciousness, so that it allows all other content whatever to exist beside it, and recognizes it as objective truth. In contrast to this, that faith of reflection, which denies all objectivity to truth, holds fast to that solitude of subjectivity alone, and recognizes it alone. In this fully developed reflection the divine world, like all other content, is merely something posited by me.

This first relation of the Hindu to Brahma is set down only in the one single prayer, and since it is itself the existence of Brahma, the momentary character of this existence at once shows itself to be inadequate to the content, and consequently a demand arises that this existence itself should be rendered universal and lasting like its content. For it is only the momentary time element which appears as the most obvious defect in that existence, it being that alone which stands in relation with that abstract Universality, compares itself with it, and shows itself to be inadequate to it; for in other respects its subjective existence—the



abstract "I"—is equal or commensurate with it. But to exalt that merely single look into a permanent seeing means nothing else than to stop the transition from the moment of this quiet solitude into the full present reality of life, of its needs, interests, and occupations, and to preserve oneself continuously in that motionless abstract self-consciousness. This is what, in fact, many Hindus who are not Brahmans (of whom later on) virtually accomplish. They give themselves up with the most persevering callousness to the monotony of an inactivity extending over years, and especially to an inactivity of ten years' duration, in which they renounce all the interests and occupations of ordinary life, and combine with this renunciation the constraint arising from some unnatural attitude or position of the body, as, for example, sitting even on, going with the hands clasped over the head, or else standing, and never even in sleep lying down, and the like.

We now come to the Second in the triad, Krishna or Vishnu; that is, the incarnation of Brahma generally. Many and various are the incarnations of this kind which are reckoned up by the Hindus. The general meaning here is that Brahma appears as man: it cannot, nevertheless, be said that it is Brahma who appears as man, for this assumption of humanity is not actually held to be the pure form of Brahma.

Monstrous poetical fictions make their appearance in this region: Krishna is also Brahma, Vishnu. These popular conceptions of incarnations appear partly to have in them echoes of what is historical, and point to the fact that great conquerors who gave a new shape to the condition of things are the gods, and are thus described as gods. The deeds of Krishna are conquests in connection with which the course of events was sufficiently ungodlike; indeed, conquest and amours are the two aspects, the most important acts of the incarnations.

The Third is Shiva, Mahadeva, the great god, or Rudra—this ought to be the return into self. The First, namely, Brahma, is the most distant unity, the self-enclosed unity; the Second, Vishnu, is manifestation (the moments of Spirit are thus far not to be mistaken), is life in human form. The Third should be the return to the First, in order that the unity might appear as returning into itself. But it is just this Third which is what is devoid of Spirit; it is the determination of Becoming generally, or of coming into being and passing away. It has been stated that change in the general sense is the Third; thus the fundamental characteristic of Shiva is on the one hand the prodigious life-force, on the other what

destroys, devastates; the wild energy of natural life. Its principal symbol is therefore the Ox, on account of its strength, but the most universal representation is the Lingam, which was revered among the Greeks as *phallus* and it is this sign which is to be found in most of the temples. The innermost sanctuary contains it.

Such are the three fundamental determinations: the whole is represented by a figure with three heads, which again is symbolical and wholly without beauty.

The true Third, according to the deeper conception, is Spirit. It is the return of the One—to itself; it is its coming to itself. It is not merely change, but is the change in which the difference is brought to reconciliation with the First, in which the duality is annulled.

But in this religion, which still belongs to nature, the Becoming is conceived of as mere becoming, as mere change; not as a change of the difference by means of which the unity produces itself as an annulling of differentiation and the taking of it up into unity. Consciousness, Spirit, is also a change in the First, that is, in the immediate unity. The Other is the act of judgment or differentiation, the having an Other over against one—I exist as knowing—but in such a manner that while the Other is for me, I have returned in that Other to myself, into myself.

The Third, instead of being the reconciler, is here merely this wild play of begetting and destroying. Thus the development issues only in a wild whirl of delirium. This difference, viz., the Third, is essentially based upon the standpoint of natural religion and based upon it in its entirety.

These differentiations are now grasped as Unity—as Trimurti—and this again is conceived of as the Highest. But just as this is conceived of as Trimurti, each person too in turn is taken independently and alone, so that each is itself totality, that is, the whole deity.

In the older part of the Vedas it is not Vishnu, and still less Shiva, that is spoken of; there Brahma, the One, is alone God.

Not only is this principal basis and fundamental determination in the Indian mythology thus personified, but all else too is superficially personified by means of imagination. Imposing natural objects, such as the Ganges, the Sun, the Himalaya (which is the special dwelling-place of Shiva), become identified with Brahma himself. So too with love, deceit, theft, avarice, as well as the sensuous powers of nature in plants and animals, so that Substance has the form of animals and the

like. All these are conceived of by imagination as free and independent, and thus there arises an infinite world of Deities of particular powers and phenomena, which is notwithstanding known as subordinated to something above it. At the head of this world stands Indra, the god of the visible heavens. These gods are mutable and perishable, and are in subjection to the Supreme One; abstraction absorbs them: the power which man acquires by means of these gods strikes them with terror; indeed, Vishvamitra even creates another Indra and other gods!

Thus these particular spiritual and natural Powers, which are regarded as deities, are at one time independent, and at another are regarded as vanishing, it being their nature to be submerged in the absolute unity, in Substance, and to spring into existence again out of it.

Thus the Hindus say there have already been many thousand Indras, and there will yet be more; in the same way the incarnations, too, are held to be transient. The substantial unity does not become concrete because the particular Powers return into it, but, on the contrary, it remains abstract unity; and it also does not become concrete although these determinate existences proceed out of it; rather they are phenomena with the characteristic of independence, and are posited outside of that unity.

To form an estimate of the number and value of these deities is wholly out of the question here; there is nothing which takes a fixed shape, since all definite form is wanting to this fantastic imagination. These shapes disappear again in the same manner in which they are begotten; fancy passes over from an ordinary external mode of existence to divinity, and this in like manner returns back again to that which was its starting-point.

It is impossible to speak of miracles here, for all is miracle; everything is dislocated, and nothing determined by means of a rational connection of the categories of thought. Undoubtedly a great deal is symbolical.

The Hindus are, moreover, divided into many sects. Among many other differences, the principal one is this, that some worship Vishnu and others Shiva. This is often the occasion of bloody wars; at festivals and fairs especially, disputes arise which cost thousands their lives.

Now these distinctions are in a general sense to be understood as meaning that what is called Vishnu even says again regarding itself that it is All, that Brahma is the womb in which it begets All, and that it is the

absolute activity of form, that indeed it is Brahma. Here this differentiation represented by Vishnu is removed and absorbed.

If it is Shiva who is introduced as speaking, then it is he who is absolute totality; he is the luster of precious stones, the energy in man, the reason in the soul—in fact, he too in turn is Brahma. Here all the Powers, even the two other differences, as well as the other Powers, gods of nature and genii, melt into One Person, into one of these differentiations.

The fundamental determination of the theoretical consciousness is therefore the determination of unity, the determination of that which is called Brahma, Brahma, and the like. This unity, however, comes to have an ambiguous meaning, inasmuch as Brahma is at one time the Universal, the All, and at another a particularity as contrasted with particularity in general. Thus Brahma appears as creator, and then again as subordinate to something else, and he even speaks of something higher than himself—of a universal soul. The confusion which characterizes this sphere originates in the dialectic necessarily belonging to it. Spirit, which puts everything in organic connection, is not present here, and therefore if the determinations never make their appearance at all in the form adequate to Spirit, they have to be abrogated as one-sided, and then a fresh form makes its appearance. The necessity of the Notion manifests itself merely as deviation, as confusion, as something which has nothing within itself to give it stability, and it is to the nature of the Notion that this confusion owes its origin.

The One shows itself as fixed or established in its own right, as that which is in everlasting unity with itself. But since this One must advance to particularization, which, however, remains devoid of Spirit here, all differentiations are called and are in turn Brahma, are this One within itself, and thus also appropriate the epithet of the One, and so the particular deities are all Brahma likewise. An Englishman who, by a most careful investigation into the various representations, has sought to discover what is meant by Brahma, believes that Brahma is an epithet of praise, and is used as such just because he is not looked on as being himself solely this One, but, on the contrary, everything says of itself that it is Brahma. I refer to what Mill says in his *History of India*. He proves from many Indian writings that it is an epithet of praise which is applied to various deities, and does not represent the conception of perfection or unity which we associate with it. This is a mistake, for Brahma is in

one aspect the One, the Immutable, who has, however, the element of change in him, and because of this, the rich variety of forms which is thus essentially his own is also predicated of him. Vishnu is also called the Supreme Brahma. Water and the sun are Brahma. Special prominence is given to the sun in the Vedas, and if we were to reckon up the prayers addressed to it, we might suppose that the ancient inhabitants of India found Brahma in the sun alone, and that they had thus a different religion from that of their descendants. The air, too, the movement of the atmosphere, breath, understanding, happiness are called Brahma. Mahadeva calls himself Brahma, and Shiva says of himself, "I am what is and what is not; I have been everything; I am always and shall always be; I am Brahma and likewise Brahma; I am the cause which causes, I am the truth, the ox, and all living things; I am older than all; I am the past, the present, and the future; I am Rudra, I am all worlds," etc.

Thus Brahma is the One, and is also everything independently which is conceived of as God. Among other prayers, we find one addressed to speech, in which it says of itself, "I am Brahma," the universal supreme soul. Brahma is thus this One, which, however, is not exclusively held fast to as this One. He is not such a Being as we have in our minds when we speak of one God; this One God is universal unity; here everything which is independent, which is identical with itself says, "I am Brahma."

By way of conclusion, another description may be given here, in which all the moments which we have hitherto considered in their divided state and dialectic are expressed unitedly.

Colonel Dow translated a history of India from the Persian, and in an accompanying dissertation he gives a translation from the Vedas, and in it there is a description of the creation of the world.

Brahma existed from all eternity in the form of immeasurable expansion; when it pleased him to create the world he said, "Rise up, O Brahma!" What was first had thus been desire, appetite. He says this to himself. Immediately thereupon a spirit of flames of fire, having four heads and four hands, issued from his navel. Brahma looked around and saw nothing but his own immeasurable image. He journeyed a thousand years in order to attain a knowledge of his expansion and to understand it. This fire again is Brahma himself, and he has himself alone for his object as immeasurable. Now Brahma, after the journey of a thousand years, knew as little about his expansion as he did before. Sunk in wonderment, he gave up his journeyings and considered what he had seen. The

Almighty, who is something different from Brahma, had then said to him, "Go, Brahma, and create the world; thou canst not understand thyself; make something understandable." Brahma had asked, "How shall I create a world?" The Almighty had answered, "Ask me and power shall be given thee." Fire had now issued out of Brahma, and he had seen the Idea of all things, which hovered before his eyes, and had said, "Let all which I see become real, but how shall I preserve the things so that they do not go to destruction?" Upon this a spirit of blue color proceeded out of his mouth; this again was Brahma himself, Vishnu, Krishna, the maintaining principle, and this he commanded to create all living things, and for their maintenance the vegetable world. Human beings were as yet wanting. Thereupon Brahma commanded Vishnu to make mankind. He did this, but the human beings which Vishnu made were idiots with great bellies, without knowledge, like the beasts of the field, without emotions and will, and with sensuous passions only; at this Brahma was wroth and destroyed them. He himself now created four persons out of his own breath, and gave them orders to rule over the creatures. But they refused to do anything else than to praise God, because they had nothing of the quality of mutability or destructibility in them, nothing of the temporal qualities of existence. Brahma now became angry. His vexation took the form of a swarthy spirit, which came forth from between the eyes. This spirit sat down before Brahma with crossed legs and folded arms, and wept, saying, "Who am I, and what is my dwelling-place to be?" Brahma replied, "Thou shalt be Rudra, and all nature thy dwelling-place; go and make men." He did so. These men were more savage than tigers, since they had nothing in them but the destructive quality; they destroyed themselves, for their only emotion was wrath. Thus we see the three gods working separately from one another; what they produce is one-sided only and without truth. Finally, Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra united their forces, and thus created men, ten of them, in fact.

## Worship

Subjective religion—the comprehension of itself by self-consciousness in relation to its divine world—corresponds with the character of that world itself.

As in this world the Idea has developed itself to such an extent that its fundamental determinations have emerged into prominence though they remain mutually external, and as in like manner the empirical world remains external and unintelligible relatively to them and to

itself, and therefore abandoned to the caprice of imagination, consciousness too, although developed in all directions, does not attain to the conception of itself as true subjectivity. The leading place in this sphere is occupied by the pure equality or identity of thought, which at the same time is inherently existing creative Power. This foundation is, however, purely theoretical. It is still the substantiality out of which indeed potentially all proceeds, and in which all is retained, but outside of which all content has assumed independence, and is not, so far as regards its determinate existence and standing, made by means of that unity into an objective and universal content. Merely theoretical, formal thought supports the content when it thus appears as accidentally determined; it can indeed abstract from it, but cannot exalt it to the connected unity of a system, and consequently to a connected existence in accordance with law. Thought, therefore, does not really acquire a practical signification here; that is to say, activity and will do not give the character of universality to its determinations; and though form develops itself potentially, indeed, in accordance with the nature of the Notion, still it does not appear in the character of something posited by the Notion, and does not appear as held within its unity. The activity of the will, therefore, does not arrive at freedom of the will—does not arrive at a content which, being determined through the unity of the Notion, would consequently be rational, objective, and in accordance with right. This unity, on the contrary, remains the merely potentially existent substantial Power existing in seclusion, namely, Brahma, which has let go actuality as mere contingency, and now abandons it entirely to its own wild caprice.

Worship here is first of all a certain attitude of the self-consciousness Brahma, and then afterwards to the rest of the divine world existing outside of him.

*I.* As regards the first attitude, that towards Brahma, we find that it is specially marked off and peculiar exactly in proportion as it keeps itself isolated from the rest of the concrete, religious, and temporal fullness of life.

1. Brahma is thought, man is a thinking being, thus Brahma has essentially an existence in human self-consciousness. Man, however, is essentially characterized here as a thinking being, or, in other words, thought as such, and in the first place as pure theory has universal existence here, because thought itself as such, as inherently Power, is given

a determinate character, and consequently has in it form generally, namely, abstract form, or the character of determinate Being in general.

Man, indeed, is not only a thinking being, but is here essentially thought; he is conscious of himself as pure thought; for it has just been stated that here thought as such comes into existence; here man has the general idea of it within himself. In other words, he is actually self-conscious thought, for thought is implicitly Power, but Power itself is just that infinite negativity, that negativity relating itself to itself, which is actual Being, Being-for-self. But Being-for-self, enclosed within the universality of thought generally, exalted in it to free equality with itself, is the soul of a living creature only, not the powerful self-consciousness imprisoned within the particularity of desire, but the self of consciousness, which knows itself in its universality, and which thus as thinking itself, as forming conceptions within itself, knows itself as Brahma.

Or if we proceed from the determination that Brahma is Essence as abstract unity, as absorption in self, he has then his existence in the finite subject too, in the particular Spirit, as this absorption in self. To the Idea of the true there belongs the universal substantial unity and identity with self; but in such a way that it is not merely the Undetermined, not merely substantial unity, but is determined within itself. Brahma, however, has the determinateness outside of him. Thus the supreme determinateness of Brahma, namely, consciousness, the knowing of his real existence, his subjectivity of unity, can only be the subjective consciousness as such.

This attitude is not to be called worship, for there is here no relation to the thinking substantiality as to anything objective, but, on the contrary, the relation is immediately known along with the determination of my subjectivity, as "I myself." In fact, I am this pure thought, and the "I" itself is indeed the very expression of it, for "I" as such is this abstract identity of myself within myself as wholly without determination—"I" as "I" am merely thought as that which is posited with the determination of subjective existence reflected into itself—I am *what thinks*. Conversely, therefore, it is conceded, on the other hand, that thought as this abstract thought has this very subjectivity which "I" directly expresses as its existence. For the true thought, which God is, is not this abstract thought, or this simple substantiality and universality, but is thought as the concrete, absolutely full or filled up Idea. The thought which is merely the potential existence of the Idea is just the abstract



thought which has merely this finite existence, namely, in the subjective self-consciousness, and which has not relatively to the latter the objectivity of concrete being in-and-for-self, and therefore is quite justly not held in reverence by it.

Every Hindu is himself momentarily Brahma. Brahma is this One, the abstraction of thought, and to the extent to which a man puts himself into the condition of self-concentration, he is Brahma. Brahma himself is not worshipped; the One God has no temple, has no worship, and no prayer is addressed to him.<sup>1</sup>

2. Since in this first attitude we have only one moment of single prayer, of devotion, so that Brahma is momentary only in his existence, and since this existence is thus inadequate to such content and its universality, the demand arises that this existence should be made into a universal one, such as the content is. The "I," abstractly as such, is the universal, only that this itself is merely a moment in the existence of abstraction; the next demand therefore is that this abstraction, this "I" should be made commensurate with the content. This exaltation means nothing else than the breaking off of the transition from the moment of still solitude into life, into the concrete present, into concrete self-consciousness. With this, all life and all relations of concrete actual life to the One are to be renounced. The entire living Present, whether that of natural life or of spiritual life, of the family, of the State, of art, of religion, is dissolved in the pure negativity of abstract selflessness.

The highest point which is thus attained to in worship is that union with God which consists in the annihilation and stupefaction of self-consciousness. This is not affirmative liberation and reconciliation, but

<sup>1</sup> An Englishman, the author of a treatise on "Idol-worship among the Hindus," makes a number of reflections on the subject, and says, if a Hindu were asked whether he worships idols, he would answer without the least hesitation, "Yes, I worship idols." If, on the other hand, we were to ask a Hindu, whether learned or unlearned, "Do you worship the Supreme Being, Paramesvara? Do you pray to Him? Do you bring Him offerings?," he would then say, "Never." If we were to inquire further, "What is this tranquil devotion, this silent meditation which is enjoined on you and which you practice?" He would then reply, "When I engage in prayer, sit down, cross my legs over one another, fold my hands, and look toward heaven, and concentrate my spirit and my thoughts without speaking, I then say within myself, 'I am Brahma, the Supreme Being.'"

is, on the contrary, wholly negative, complete abstraction. It is that complete emptying which makes renunciation of all consciousness, will, emotions, needs. Man, so long as he persists in remaining within his own consciousness, is, according to the Hindu idea, ungodly. But the freedom of man just consists in being with himself—not in emptiness, but in willing, knowing, acting. To the Hindu, on the contrary, the complete submergence and stupefaction of the consciousness is what is highest, and he who maintains himself in this abstraction and has died to the world is called a yogi.

This state is found existing among the people of India, because many Hindus, who are not Brahmans, undertake and accomplish the task of making themselves into the "I" which is in a completely abstract condition. They renounce all movement, all interests, all inclination, and give themselves up to a still abstraction; they are revered and supported by others, they remain speechless in rigid torpor, looking toward the sun or having their eyes closed. Some remain thus during their whole life, others for twenty or thirty years.<sup>2</sup> He would then have attained to the highest state, and he who succeeds in reaching such motionlessness, such lifelessness, is, according to the opinion of the Hindus, immersed thereby in the inner life, and exists permanently as Brahma.

There is an episode in the *Ramayana* which places us entirely at this point of view. The story of the life of Vishvamitra, the companion of Rama (an incarnation of Vishnu), is thus related. There was a mighty king, who, as being such, had demanded a cow (which is worshipped in India as the generative energy of the earth) of the Brahman Vasishtha, as he had got to know of its wonderful power. Vasishtha refused it; the king thereupon seized it by force, but the cow escaped back again to Vasishtha, reproached him with having permitted it to be taken from him, since the power of a Kshatriya (which the king was) is not greater than that of a Brahman. Vasishtha then imposed on the cow the task of assembling a force for him wherewith to resist the king. The latter confronted him with his entire army, and both armies were repeatedly

<sup>2</sup> It is related of one of these Hindus that he had traveled for ten years without ever lying down, having slept standing; during the following ten years he had held his hands above his head, and then he intended to have himself suspended by the feet to swing for three hours and three-quarters over a fire, and finally to have himself buried for three hours and three-quarters.

overthrown; finally, however, Vishvamitra was conquered after his hundred sons too had been destroyed by means of a wind which Vasishtha had caused to issue from his navel. Full of despair, he hands over the government to his only remaining son, and departs with his consort to the Himalaya mountains, in order to obtain the favor of Mahadeva (Shiva). Moved by the severity of his exercises, Mahadeva is prepared to fulfill his wishes. Vishvamitra asks to have the knowledge of the whole science of archery, and this is granted him. Armed with his bow, Vishvamitra intends to coerce Vasishtha; with his arrow he lays waste his forest. Vasishtha, however, seizes his staff, the Brahmanical weapon, and lifts it up; whereupon the gods are filled with apprehension, for such a force as this threatened the entire world with destruction. They entreated the Brahman to desist. Vishvamitra recognizes his power, and now resolves to subject himself to the severest exercises in order to attain to that power. He retires into solitude, and lives there a thousand years in abstraction alone with his consort. Brahma comes to him, and addresses him thus: "I recognize thee now as the first royal sage." Vishvamitra, not content with this, begins afresh with his penances. In the meantime an Indian king had come to Vasishtha with the request that he would exalt him in his bodily form to heaven. The request, however, was refused on account of his being a Kshatriya; but on his haughtily persisting in it, he was degraded by Vasishtha to the class of the Chandala. Upon this he repairs to Vishvamitra with the same request. The latter prepares a sacrifice to which he invites all the gods; these, however, decline to come to a sacrifice made for a Chandala. Vishvamitra, however, by an exercise of his strength, lifts up the king to heaven. At the command of Indra, he drops down, but Vishvamitra sustains him between heaven and earth, and afterwards creates another heaven, other Pleiades, another Indra, and another circle of gods. The gods were filled with astonishment; they repaired in humility to Vishvamitra, and agreed with him about the place they were to assign to their king in heaven. After the lapse of a thousand years, Vishvamitra was rewarded, and Brahma named him the head of the sages, but did not as yet declare him to be a Brahman. Then Vishvamitra recommences his penances; the gods in heaven became envious; Indra attempts to excite his passions (for it is essential for a perfect sage and Brahman that he should have subjugated his passions). He sends him a very beautiful girl, with whom Vishvamitra lives five-and-twenty years, but then

withdraws himself from her, having overcome his love. In vain, too, do the gods try to irritate and make him angry. Finally, the Brahmanic power has to be granted to him.

It is to be observed that this is no expiation for crime; nothing is made good by means of it. This renunciation has not the consciousness of sin as a presupposition. These are, on the contrary, austerities undertaken with a view to attaining the state of Brahma. It is not penance entered upon for the purpose of atoning to the gods for any kind of crime, transgression, or offence. Penance of the latter kind presupposes the existence of a relation between the work of man, his concrete existence, his actions, and the One God—an idea which is full of content, in which man has the standard and the law of his character and behavior, and to which he is to conform himself in his will and life. But the relation to Brahma contains as yet nothing concrete, because he himself is merely the abstraction of the substantial soul; all further determination and content lies outside of him. Thus a worship, as a substantial relation which effectually influences and directs the concrete man, has no place in the relation to Brahma. If such a relation were present here at all, it would have to be sought in the adoration of the other gods. But just as Brahma is conceived as the solitary self-enclosed Being, so, too, the exaltation of the individual self-consciousness which strives, by means of the austerities just spoken of, to render its own abstraction something perennial for itself, is rather a flight out of the concrete reality of feeling and living activity. In the consciousness which says, "I am Brahma," all virtues and vices, all gods, and finally the Trimurti itself, vanish. The concrete consciousness of one's self and of objective content, which, in the Christian idea of the repentance and conversion of the universal sensuous life, is relinquished, is not characterized here as anything sinful or negative, as it is in the penitential life of Christians and Christian monks, and in the idea of conversion. On the contrary, it comprehends on the one hand, as has just been indicated, the very content, otherwise esteemed as holy; and, on the other hand, we see that the character of the religious standpoint under consideration consists just in this, that all the moments drop asunder, and that the supreme unity casts no reflection into the fullness of the heart and life.

If the Absolute be conceived of as the spiritually free, the essentially concrete, then self-consciousness exists as something essential in the religious consciousness only, to the extent to which it maintains within

itself concrete movement, ideas full of content, and concrete feeling. If, however, the Absolute is the abstraction of the "Beyond" or of the Supreme Being, then self-consciousness too, since it is by nature what thinks, by nature good, is that which it ought to be.

The man who has thus made himself into the continuously existing Brahma holds a position equivalent to that which we have already seen was held by the magician, namely, that he has won an absolute power over nature, and is that power. It is imagined that such a man can inspire even Indra with fear and apprehension. In an episode in Bopp's "Chrestomathie" the story of two giants is mentioned, who came to the Almighty with a request for immortality; but as they had entered upon their exercises merely with a view to attaining to such power, he granted their petition only to this extent, that they are to die only by some act of their own. They then exert complete dominion over nature. Indra becomes afraid of them, and employs the usual means of inducing any one to give up such an exercise of power. He brings a beautiful woman into existence; each of the giants wishes to have her for his wife. In the strife they put each other to death, and thereby nature is delivered.

3. A characteristic which is quite peculiar remains to be considered, and that is, that every Brahman, every member of that caste, is esteemed as Brahma, is regarded as God by every other Hindu. This particular way of viewing the matter, however, is in close connection with the previous characteristics. That is to say, each of the two forms which we have considered is, as it were, a merely abstract, isolated relation of self-consciousness to Brahma; the first being only a momentary one, the second only the flight out of life-lasting life in Brahma being the lasting death of all individuality. The third demand, therefore, is that this relation should not be mere flight, mere renunciation of life, but that it should also be posited in an affirmative manner. The question is: How must the affirmative mode of this relation be constituted? It can be none other than the form of immediate existence. This is a difficult transition. What is merely inward, merely abstract, is merely outward; and thus this merely Abstract is the immediate Sensuous, is sensuous externality. Since the relation here is the wholly abstract one to wholly abstract substance, the affirmative relation is in like manner a wholly abstract, and consequently an immediate one. With this we get the concrete phenomenon implying that the relation to Brahma, the relation of the self-consciousness to him, is an immediate, a natural one, and thus an inborn one, and a relation established by birth.

Man is a thinking being, and is such by nature; thought is a natural quality of man. But the fact that he is a thinking being generally expresses a quality different from the determination which is here under consideration, from the Consciousness of thought in general as the absolutely existent. In this form we have in fact the consciousness of thought, and this is then posited as the Absolute. It is the consciousness of absolute Being which is posited here as existing in a natural mode, or, to put it otherwise, which is affirmed and supposed to be inborn; and its degradation into this form is based upon the entire relation; for although it is rational knowledge, yet this consciousness is supposed to exist in an immediate form.

Since, then, man is a thinking being, and since the consciousness of thought, as the Universal, the Self-existent, is distinguished from human thought in general, while both are something innate, it follows from this that there are two classes of men, the one including thinking men, men generally, the other including those who are the consciousness of man, as absolute Being. These latter are the Brahmins, those born again, twice born through birth, first naturally, and then as thinking men. This is a profound idea. The thought of man is looked upon here as the source of his second existence, the root of his true existence, which he gives to himself by means of freedom.

Brahmins come into existence as twice born, and are held in unbounded reverence; compared with them all other men are of no value. The entire life of the Brahmins is expressive of the existence of Brahma. Their deeds consist in giving utterance to Brahma; indeed, by right of birth they are the existence of Brahma. If any one who is of a lower caste touch a Brahmin, he has by the very act incurred death. In the Code of Manu penalties are to be found for offences against Brahmins. If, for example, a Shudra utters abusive language to a Brahmin, an iron staff, ten inches long, is thrust glowing into his mouth; and if he attempt to instruct a Brahmin, hot oil is poured into his mouth and into his ears. A mysterious power is ascribed to the Brahmins; it is said in Manu, "Let no king irritate a Brahmin, for if exasperated he can destroy his kingdom, with all his strongholds, his armies, his elephants, etc."

The culminating point always is isolated thought as Brahma existing solely for itself. This culmination comes into existence in that immersion in nothingness, that wholly empty consciousness and contemplation already spoken of. This Brahma, however, this high-

est consciousness of thought, is independent, cut off from all else, and does not exist as concrete actual spirit; and accordingly it likewise follows that there is no vital connection with this unity present in the subject; on the contrary, the concrete element of self-consciousness is separated from this region; the connection is interrupted. This is the leading characteristic of this sphere of thought, which, it is true, has in it the development of the moments, but in such a way that they remain separate from one another. Self-consciousness being thus cut off, the region in which it is, is devoid of spirit, that is to say, has a merely natural character as something inborn, and to the extent to which this inborn self-consciousness is different from the universal one, it is the privilege of certain individuals. The individual "This" is in an immediate manner the Universal, the Divine. Spirit thus exists, but Spirit which has merely bare Being is devoid of Spirit. By this means, too, the life of the "this" as "this," and its life in universality are irretrievably separated from one another. In the religions where such is not the case, that is to say, where the consciousness of the Universal, of essentiality, appears in the Particular, and is active in it, freedom of the Spirit takes its rise, and upon the fact that the Particular is determined by means of the Universal depends the appearance of uprightness, morality. In civil law, for example, we find freedom of the individual in the use he can make of property. I in this particular relation of actual existence am free; the object is held to be mine, as that of a free subject, and thus the particular existence is determined through the Universal; my particular existence is co-related with this universality. The same holds good of family relations. Morality exists only where unity is what determines the Particular, where all particularity is determined by the substantial unity. In so far as this is not posited, the consciousness of the Universal is essentially a consciousness cut off from all else, inactive and devoid of Spirit. Thus by this isolation the Highest is made into something unfree and only naturally born.

II. Worship, strictly speaking, is the relation of self-consciousness to what is essential, to that which exists in and for itself; it is consciousness of the One in this essence, consciousness of one's unity with it. The second relation here is that of consciousness to these very manifold objects. The many deities constitute these objects.

Brahma has no divine service, no temple, and no altars; the unity of Brahma is not put in relation to the Real, to active self-consciousness.

From what has been stated, namely, that the consciousness of the One is isolated, it follows that nothing is determined by means of reason here in the relation to the Divine; for this would mean that particular actions, symbols, etc., are determined by means of unity. Here, however, the region of the Particular is not determined by this unity, and has thus the character of irrationality, of unfreedom. What we have is merely a relation to particular deities, which represent nature as detached or free. They are, it is true, the most abstract possible moments implicitly determined through the notion, but not taken back into unity in such a manner that the Trimurti would become Spirit. Their whole significance therefore is merely that of a mode of some particular natural element. The leading characteristic is vital energy or life force, that which produces and which passes away, what returns to life and is self-transformation, and to this natural objects, animals, etc., are linked on as objects of reverence. Thus worship is here a relation to those particular things which are cut off in a one-sided manner from what is essential, and is therefore a relation to unessential things in natural form. Religious action, that is to say, action that is essential, a universal mode of life, is conceived of and carried out in accordance with this, and is known and realized here in this fashion. And here religious action is a content which is unessential and without reason.

Since this element, considered generally, is partly objective, namely, the perception of God, and partly subjective, namely, that which it is essential to do, and seeing that what is of most importance becomes unessential, the worship is infinite in its range; everything comes into it, the content is of no importance, it has no limit within itself; the religious acts are thus essentially irrational, they are determined in an entirely external manner. Whatever is truly essential is stable; is, as regards its form, exempt from the influence of subjective opinion and caprice. Here, however, the content is this sensuous contingency, and the action is a merely characterless action, consisting of usages which cannot be understood, because there is no understanding in it; on the contrary, a latitude is introduced into it which runs out in all directions. In so far as all this is transcended, and in so far as there must lie satisfaction in these religious acts, we find this to be attained merely by means of sensuous stupefaction. The one extreme is the flight of abstraction, the middle point is the slavery of unintelligent being and doing, and the other extreme is capricious extravagance—surely the saddest possible



religion. In so far as flight or escape enters into this cult, what is actually done represents mere purely external accomplished action, mere activity, and to this are added the wildest intoxication and orgies of the most fearful kind. Such is the necessary character of this worship, a character which it acquires owing to the fact that the consciousness of the One is broken up in this way, for the connection with the rest of concrete existence is interrupted, and everything becomes disconnected. In the region of imagination are found wildness and freedom, and here fancy has free scope. Thus we find most beautiful poetry among the Indian peoples, but it always rests upon the craziest foundation; we are attracted by its loveliness, and repelled by the confusion and nonsense in it.

The delicate sensibility and charm of the tenderest feelings and this infinite resignation of personality, must necessarily possess supreme beauty under such conditions as are peculiar to this standpoint, because it is only this feeling which, resting thus upon a foundation so devoid of rationality, is molded exclusively into forms of beauty. But since this feeling of abandonment is without the element of right, it, for this very reason, is seen to alternate with the most extreme harshness, and thus the moment of the independent existence of personality passes over into ferocity, into forgetfulness of all established bonds, and issues in the trampling under foot of love itself.

The whole content of Spirit and of nature generally is allowed to break up in the wildest way. That unity which occupies the leading position is indeed the Power out of which all proceeds and into which all returns; but it does not become concrete, does not become the uniting bond of the manifold powers of nature, and in like manner does not become concrete in Spirit, nor the bond of the manifold activities of Spirit and of emotional experiences.

In the first case, when the unity becomes the bond of natural things, we call it necessity; this is the bond of natural forces and phenomena. We look upon natural properties, things, as being, though independent, essentially linked together; laws, understanding, are in Nature, so that in this way the phenomena are co-related.

But that unity remains in solitary and empty independence, and accordingly that fullness which it acquires is wild, extravagant disorder. In the spiritual world, in like manner, the Universal, thought, does not become concrete, determining itself within itself. Thought determining

itself within itself, and abrogating and preserving the determinate element in this universality pure thought as concrete, is Reason.

Duty, right, exist in thought only. These determinations when they appear in the form of universality are rational in respect to the truth, the unity just spoken of, and likewise in respect to the will. That One, that solitary unity, however, does not become such concrete unity, reason, rationality.

For this reason there is no right, no duty present here, for the freedom of the will, of the Spirit, just consists in being present with itself in determinateness. But here this being present or at home with itself, this unity, is abstract, is devoid of determinate character. And here is one source of the fantastic polytheism of the Hindus.

It has been remarked that the category of Being is not found here; the Hindus have no category for what we call independent existence in things, or what we express when we say "they are," "these are." Man, to begin with, knows himself only as existing independently, he therefore conceives of an independent object of nature as existing with his independence, in the mode of independence which he has in himself, in his Being, in his human form, as consciousness.

Here fancy makes everything into God. This is what we see in its own fashion among the Greeks, too, where all trees and springs are made into dryads or nymphs. We are accustomed to say that the beautiful imagination of man gives soul and life to everything, conceives everything as endowed with life, that man wanders among his like, anthropomorphizes everything, by his beautiful sympathy shares with everything that mode of beauty which is his own, and thus, as it were, presses everything to his heart as having animated life.

But the liberality of the Hindus in the wild extravagance of their desire to share their mode of existence, has its foundation in a poor idea of themselves, in the fact that the individual has not as yet within himself the content of the freedom of the Eternal, the truly and essentially existent, and does not as yet know his content, his true nature, to be higher than the content of a spring or of a tree. Everything is squandered on imagination, and nothing reserved for life.

With the Greeks this is more a play of fancy, while among the Hindus there is no higher feeling of themselves present. The idea which they have of Being is only that which they have of themselves; they place themselves upon the same level with all the productions

of nature. This is because thought lapses so completely into this abstraction.

These natural powers, then, whose being is thus conceived of as anthropomorphic and as conscious, are above the concrete man, who, as having a physical nature, is dependent upon them, and his freedom is not as yet distinguished from this his natural aspect.

It is implied by this that the life of man has no higher value than the being of natural objects, the life of any natural thing; the life of man has value only if it is in itself or essentially, higher; but among the Hindus human life is despised, and is esteemed to be of little worth—there a man cannot give himself value in an affirmative, but only in a negative manner.

Life acquires value only by the negation of itself. All that is concrete is merely negative in relation to abstraction, which is here the ruling principle. From this results that aspect of Hindu worship according to which men sacrifice themselves, and parents their children. To this is due, too, the burning of wives after the death of their husbands. Such sacrifices have a higher value when they take place with express reference to Brahma, or to any god whatever, for the latter is Brahma likewise.

It is esteemed among the Hindus a sacrifice of high value when they mount to the snow clefts of the Himalaya, where the sources of the Ganges are, and cast themselves into the springs. Such actions are not penances on account of crime, nor are they sacrifices with a view to making amends for any evil deed, but merely sacrifices to give oneself value, and this value can be attained only in a negative way.

With the position which is here given to man animal-worship is closely connected. An animal is not a conscious spirit, but in this concentration of absence of consciousness man is really not far removed from the brutes. By the Hindus action is not conceived as definite activity, but as simple energy which works through everything. Special activity is despised; it is only stupefaction which is held in esteem, and in this state it is clearly the animal life alone which is left remaining. And if no freedom, no morality, no good customs be present, then the power is only known as inward, torpid power, which belongs likewise to the brutes, and to them in the most complete degree.

Since man when he exists in this way is without freedom, and has no intrinsic worth, we find bound up with this in the sphere of concrete

extension that unspeakable and infinitely varied superstition, those enormous fetters and limitations above referred to. The relation of man to external natural things, which is of little consequence to Europeans, that dependence on them, becomes something fixed, something permanent. For superstition has its foundation just in this, that man is not indifferent toward external things; and he is not so if he has no freedom within himself, if he has not the true independence of spirit. All that is indifferent is fixed, while all that is not indifferent, all that belongs to right and morality, is thrown away and abandoned to caprice.

Of this character are the directions which the Brahmans have to observe, and of a similar character, too, is the narrative of Nala in the *Mahabharata*. Just as superstition is of limitless extent owing to this want of freedom, so too it follows that no morality, no determination of freedom, no rights, no duties have any place here, so that the people of India are sunk in the most complete immorality. Since no rational determination has been able to attain to solidity, the entire condition of this people could never become a legitimate one, a condition inherently justified, and was always merely a condition on sufferance, a contingent and a perverted one.

[...]

### **Natural Religion in Transition to the Religion of Freedom**

As regards its necessity, this transition is based upon the fact that the truth which in the preceding stages is potentially present as the foundation is here actually brought forward and posited. In the Religion of Fantasy and that of Being-within-itself, this subject, this subjective self-consciousness, is identical, though in an immediate manner, with that substantial unity which is called Brahma or characterless nothingness. This One is now conceived of as unity determined within itself, as implicitly subjective unity, and at the same time as this unity in its character as implicitly totality. If the unity be inherently determined as subjective, it then contains the principle of Spirituality in itself, and it is this principle which unfolds itself in the religions which are based upon this transition.

Further, in the Indian religion the One, the unity of Brahma, and determinateness, the many Powers of the Particular, this appearance of differences, stood in a relation to each other which implied that at one

time the differences were held to be independent, and at another that they had disappeared and were submerged in unity. The dominant and universal characteristic was the alternation of origination and passing away; the alternation of the annulling and absorption of the particular Powers in the unity, and of procession out of unity. In the Religion of Being-within-itself this alternation was indeed brought to rest in so far as the particular differences fell back into the unity of nothingness, but this unity was empty and abstract, and the truth is, on the contrary, the unity which is concrete within itself and is totality, so that even that abstract unity, together with the element of difference, enters into the true unity in which the differences are posited as annulled, as ideal, negative, and non-self-subsisting, but at the same time as preserved.

The unfolding of the moments of the Idea, the self-differentiation of the thought of absolute Substance, was therefore hitherto defective, in so far as the forms or shapes lost themselves on the one hand in hard fixity, while on the other it was merely by flight that unity was reached, or to put it otherwise, the unity was merely the disappearance of the differences. Now, however, the reflection of manifoldness into itself appears, implying that Thought itself contains determination within itself, so that it is self-determination, and determination has only worth and substantive content in so far as it is reflected into this unity. Together with this, the notion of freedom, objectivity, is posited, and the divine Notion thus becomes the unity of the finite and infinite. The Thought which only exists within itself, pure Substance, is the Infinite, and the finite, in accordance with the thought-determination, is the many gods; while the unity is negative unity, abstraction, which submerges the Many in this One. But this last has gained nothing by this; it is undetermined as before, and the finite is only affirmative outside of the Infinite, not within it, and hence so soon as it is affirmative it is finitude which is devoid of rationality. But now the finite, the determinate in general is taken up into infinitude, the form is commensurate with the substance, the infinite form is identical with the substance, which determines itself within itself, and is not merely abstract Power.

The other equally essential determination is that with this the separation of the empirical self-consciousness from the Absolute, from the content of the Highest, for the first time takes place, that here for the first time God attains true objectivity. At the former stages it is the empirical self-consciousness immersed in itself which is Brahma, this

abstraction within self, or, in other words, the Highest is present as a human being. Thus substantial unity is still inseparable from the subject, and in so far as it is still something imperfect, is not as yet in its very nature subjective unity; it still has the subject outside of it. The objectivity of the Absolute, the consciousness of its independence in its own right, is not present.

Here this breach between subjectivity and objectivity takes place for the first time, and it is here that objectivity for the first time properly deserves the name of God; and we have this objectivity of God here because this content has determined itself by its own act to be potentially concrete totality. The meaning of this is that God is a Spirit, that God is the Spirit in all religions.

When, as happens with special frequency at the present day, we hear it said that subjective consciousness forms a part of religion, the idea expressed is a correct one. We have here the instinct that subjectivity belongs to religion. But people have an idea that the spiritual can exist as an empirical subject, which then as empirical consciousness can have a natural thing for its God, and this means that spirituality can come into consciousness only, and God, too, as a natural existence, can be an object for this consciousness.

Thus, on the one side, we have God as a natural existence; but God is essentially Spirit, and this is the absolute characteristic quality of religion in general, and therefore the fundamental characteristic, the substantial basis, in every form of religion. The natural thing is presented in a human fashion, and also as personality, as spirit, as consciousness; but the deities of the Hindus are still superficial personifications—the personification by no means implies that the object, God, is known as Spirit. It is these particular objects, the sun, a tree, which are personified. The incarnations of the deities, too, have their place here; the particular objects have, however, an independence, and because they are particular and natural objects the independence is only a fictitious one.

But the Highest is Spirit, and it is from the empirical subjective spirit in the first instance that this spiritual determination and independence is derived, either where it gets a definite shape, or where Brahma has his existence in and through immersion of the subject in itself. Now, however, it is no longer the case that man is God or God is man—that God exists merely in an empirico-human mode; on the contrary, God is truly objective in His own nature, is in His very Being totality, concretely

determined in Himself, that is to say, known as being in His real nature subjective, and thus is He for the first time essentially an Object, and stands over against man in general.

The return to the thought that God appears as man, as God-man, we shall find later on; but it is here that this objectivity of God has its beginning.

Now if the Universal be conceived as determination of self within self, then it comes into opposition with what is Other than itself, and represents strife with the Other of itself. In the religion of Power there is no opposition, no strife, for the accidental has no value for Substance.

Power now determining itself by its own act, has not, indeed, these determinations as something finite. On the contrary, what is determined exists in its complete and independent truth. By means of this, God is determined as the Good; goodness is not laid down as a predicate here, but He is simply the Good. In what has no determinate character there is neither good nor evil. The Good, on the other hand, is here the Universal, but with one purpose or end—a determinate character, which is commensurate with the universality in which it is.

To begin with, however, the self-determination of self is at this stage exclusive. Thus the Good comes into relation with what is Other, the Evil, and this relation is strife—dualism. Reconciliation, here a becoming or something that ought-to-be only, is not as yet thought of as in and pertaining to this Goodness itself.

Here it is at once posited as a necessary consequence that the strife comes to be known as a characteristic of Substance itself. The Negative is posited in Spirit itself, and this is compared with its affirmation, so that this comparison is present in felt experience, and constitutes pain, death. And here, finally, the strife, which dies away, is the wrestling of Spirit to come to itself, to attain to freedom.

[...]

If Brahma had to be represented in a sensuous fashion, he could only be represented as abstract space. Brahma has not as yet, however, the force within himself to be independently represented, but has as his realization the empirical consciousness of man.

[...]

Brahma, for example, is merely abstract thought; looked upon in a sensuous way, he would, as has been already stated, correspond merely with the perception of space, a sensuous universality of perception which is itself merely abstract.

[...]

### **The Religion of Mystery**

The form which is peculiar to the religions of anterior Asia is that of the mediation of Spirit with itself, in which the natural element is still predominant; the form of transition where we start from the Other as representing what Nature in general is, and where the transition does not yet appear as the coming of Spirit to itself. The further stage at which we have now arrived is where this transition shows itself as a coming of Spirit to itself, yet not in such a way that this return is a reconciliation, but rather that the strife, the struggle, is the object, as a moment, however, of the Divinity itself.

This transition to spiritual religion contains, it is true, concrete subjectivity within itself; it is, however, the free, unregulated play of this simple subjectivity; it is the development of it, yet a development which is still, as it were, in a wild and effervescent state, and has not as yet arrived at a state of tranquility, at the true spirituality which is essentially free.

As in India the parts of this development were seen in an isolated state, so here the determinateness is in its detached state, but in such wise that these elementary powers of the Spiritual and the Natural are essentially related to subjectivity, and so related that it is one single subject which passes through these moments.

In the Indian religions, also, we had origination and passing away, but not subjectivity, return into the One, not One which itself passes through these forms and differences, and in them and from out of them returns into itself. It is this higher Power of subjectivity which, when developed, lets the element of difference go out of itself, but when enclosed within itself holds fast, or rather overpowers the difference.

[...]

Among the Hindus and Chinese we meet with sublime descriptions of God, so that higher religions have no superiority over them



in this respect: these are so-called pure conceptions of God (such, for example, as those in Friedrich von Schlegel's "*Weisheit der Indier*"), and are regarded as survivals of the perfect original religion.

[...]

What really constitutes the special difficulty in the study of religion is that we have not to do here, as in logic, with pure thought-determinations, nor with existing ones, as in Nature, but with such as are not wanting in the moment of self-consciousness, of finite spirit in fact, since they have already run their course through subjective and objective Spirit. For religion is itself the self-consciousness of Spirit regarding its self, and Spirit makes the different stages of self-consciousness themselves, by which Spirit is developed into the object of consciousness for itself. The content of the object is God, the absolute Totality, and therefore the entire manifoldness of matter is never wanting. It is necessary, however, to seek more precisely for definite categories, which form the differences of the religions. This difference is especially sought for in the mode of working of the Essence; this last is everywhere, and yet is not; it is further made to turn on the question as to whether there is or is not *one* God. This distinction is just as little to be relied upon, for even in the Indian religion there is to be found One God, and the difference then merely consists in the mode in which the many divine forms bind themselves together into unity. There are several Englishmen who hold that the ancient Indian religion contains the idea of the unity of God as a sun or universal soul. But predicates of the understanding such as these don't help us here.

When such predicates are given to God, we do not by the help of these determinations get a knowledge of Him in His true nature. They are even predicates of finite Nature, for it, too, is powerful, is wise. Taken as representing a knowledge of God, they would be extended over finite matter through the All. In this way, however, the predicates lose their definite meaning and are transient, like the Trimurti in Brahma. What is essential is contained in the One, in what is substantial, immanent; it is essential determination, which is conceived and known as such. These are not the predicates of reflection, not external form, but Idea (*Idee*).

Thus we have already had the determination of subjectivity, of self-determination, but merely in a superficial form, and not yet as

constructing the nature of God. In the Religion of Light, this determination was abstract universal personification, because in the Person the absolute moments are not contained as developed or unfolded. Subjectivity is just abstract identity with self, is Being-within-itself, which differentiates itself, but which is likewise the negativity of this difference, which latter maintains itself in the difference, does not let it escape out of itself, retains its sway over it, is in it, but in it independently, has the difference within it momentarily.

If we consider this in relation to the next form, subjectivity is this negativity which relates itself to itself, and the negative is no longer outside of the Good, but rather it must be contained, posited in the affirmative relation to self, and thus is, in fact, no longer the Evil. Therefore the negative, Evil, must now no longer exist outside of the Good. It is just the essential nature of Good to be Evil, whereby of course Evil no longer remains Evil, but as Evil relating itself to itself, annuls its evil character and constitutes itself into Good. Good is that negative relation to itself as its other by which it posits Evil, just as the latter is the movement which posits its negation as negative, that is to say, which annuls it. This double movement is subjectivity. This is no longer that which Brahma is; in Brahma these differences merely vanish, or, in so far as the difference is posited, it is found as an independent god outside of Brahma.

[...]

Just as distinctions vanish in Brahma, in this abstraction, when self-consciousness says, "I am Brahma," and from that moment everything that is divine, all that is good, has vanished in him, so the abstraction has no content, and the latter, in so far as it is outside of it, moves unsteadily about in a state of independence. In relation to particular existences, power is the active agent, the basis; but it remains the inner element merely, and acts in a universal way only. That which universal power brings forth, in so far as it is implicit, is also the Universal, the Laws of Nature; these belong to the power which is potentially existent. This power acts; it is implicit power, its working likewise is implicit, it acts unconsciously, and existing things, such as sun, stars, sea, rivers, men, animals, etc., appear as independent existences; their inner element only is determined by the power. Power can only show itself in this sphere as in opposition to the laws of nature, and here, accordingly, would be

the place of miracles. But among the Hindus there are no miracles, for they have no rational intelligent Nature. Nature has no intelligent correlation; everything is miraculous, and therefore there are no miracles. These latter cannot exist until the God is determined as Subject, and as Power which has independent Being, and works in the manner characteristic of subjectivity. Where potentially existent Power is represented as subject, it is of no consequence in what form it appears; accordingly it is represented in human beings, in animals, etc. That vital force acts as immediate power cannot in any case be denied, since as power which is implicitly existent it works invisibly without showing itself.

[...]

Brahma, for example, does not act; independent action is either merely imagined, or else pertains to the changing incarnations. Yet it is only a limited end or purpose which can come in here; the subjectivity is merely the primal subjectivity, of which the content cannot as yet be infinite truth.

[...]

We have already had negation in the form of death too. In Hindu mythology there are many incarnations; Vishnu especially is the history of the world, and is now in the eleventh or twelfth incarnation. The Dalai Lama in like manner dies; Indra, too, the god of the natural sphere dies, and there are others who die and come back again.

But this dying is different from the negativity which is in question here, namely, death in so far as it pertains to the subject. As regards this difference, all depends on the logical determinations. In all religions analogies may be found, such ideas as those of God becoming man and of incarnations. The name Krishna has even been put side by side with that of Christ. Such comparisons, however, although the objects compared have something in common, some similar characteristic, are utterly superficial. The essential thing on which all depends is the fuller characterization of the distinction, which last is overlooked.

Thus the thousand-fold dying of Indra is of a different kind from that above referred to. The Substance remains one and the same; it forsakes merely the particular individual body of the one Lama, but has directly chosen for itself another. This dying, therefore, this negation, has nothing to do with Substance, it is not posited in the Self, in the subject

as such. The negation is not an actual inner moment, an immanent determination of Substance, and the latter has not the pain of death within itself.

Here, for the first time, we have the death of the god as something within himself, implying that the negation is immanent in his essential nature, in his very self, and it is precisely owing to this that this god is essentially characterized as Subject. The nature of a subject is to give itself this otherness within itself, and through negation of itself to return to itself, to produce itself.

This death appears at first as something undignified; we have the idea that it is the lot of the finite to pass away, and in accordance with this idea death, in so far as it is spoken of in connection with God, is only transferred to Him as a determination out of the sphere of that finite which is inadequate to Him. God does not in this way get to be truly known, but rather is debased by the determination of negation. Over against that assertion of the presence of death in the divine stands the demand that God should be conceived of as a supreme Being, only identical with himself, and this conception is reckoned as the highest and most honorable, so that it is only at the end that Spirit reaches it. If God be thus conceived as the Supreme Being, He is without content, and this is the poorest possible idea of Him, and quite an antiquated one. The first step of the objective attitude is the step to this abstraction, to Brahma, in whom no negativity is contained. Good, light, is likewise this abstraction, which has the negative only outside of itself as darkness. From this abstraction an advance is already made here to the concrete idea of God, and in this way the moment of negation enters, at first in this peculiar or special mode as death, inasmuch as God is now beheld in human form. And thus the moment of death is to be ranked high, as an essential moment of God Himself—as immanent in Essence. To self-determination belongs the moment of inner, not outward negativity, as is already implied in the expression “self-determination.” The death which here comes into prominence is not like the death of the Lama, of Buddha, of Indra, and other Indian deities, whose negativity is an external one, and approaches them as a power that is external to them. It is a sign that there has been an advance toward conscious spirituality, to knowledge of freedom, to the knowledge of God. This moment of negation is an absolutely true moment of God. Death, then, is a peculiar special

form, in which negation makes its appearance in an outward shape. By reason of the divine totality the moment of immediate form must become recognized in the divine Idea, for to it there must be nothing wanting.

Thus the moment of negation is immanent in the divine Notion, because it essentially belongs to it in its outward manifestation. In the other religions we have seen that the essential nature of God is merely determined as abstract Being-within-itself, absolute substantiality of Himself. There death is not thought of as belonging to substance, but is regarded merely as external form, in which the god shows himself. It is quite otherwise when it is an event which happens to the god himself, and not merely to the individual in whom he presents himself. It is thus the essential nature of God which comes into prominence here in this determination.

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## The Philosophy of Mind (*Encyclopedia*, Part III)\*

Here might seem to be the place to treat in a definite exposition of the reciprocal relations of philosophy and religion. The whole question turns entirely on the difference of the forms of speculative thought from the forms of mental representation and "reflecting" intellect. But it is the whole cycle of philosophy, and of logic in particular, which has not merely taught and made known this difference, but also criticized it, or rather has let its nature develop and judge itself by these very categories. It is only by an insight into the value of these forms that the true and needful conviction can be gained, that the content of religion and philosophy is the same—leaving out, of course, the further details of external nature and finite mind which fall outside the range of religion. But religion is the truth *for all men*: faith rests on the witness of the spirit, which as witnessing is the spirit in man. This witness—the underlying essence in all humanity—takes, when driven to expound itself, its first definite form under those acquired habits of thought

\* From *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Translated from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), § 573, pp. 182–96.

which his secular consciousness and intellect otherwise employs. In this way the truth becomes liable to the terms and conditions of finitude in general. This does not prevent the spirit, even in employing sensuous ideas and finite categories of thought, from retaining its content (which as religion is essentially speculative) with a tenacity which does violence to them, and acts *inconsistently* towards them. By this inconsistency it corrects their defects. Nothing easier therefore for the "Rationalist" than to point out contradictions in the exposition of the faith, and then to prepare triumphs for its principle of formal identity. If the spirit yields to this finite reflection, which has usurped the title of reason and philosophy—"Rationalism"—it strips religious truth of its infinity and makes it in reality nought. Religion in that case is completely in the right in guarding herself against such reason and philosophy and treating them as enemies. But it is another thing when religion sets herself against comprehending reason, and against philosophy in general, and specially against a philosophy of which the doctrine is speculative, and so religious. Such an opposition proceeds from failure to appreciate the difference indicated and the value of spiritual form in general, and particularly of the logical form; or, to be more precise still, from failure to note the distinction of the content—which may be in both the same—from these forms. It is on the ground of form that philosophy has been reproached and accused by the religious party; just as conversely its speculative content has brought the same charges upon it from a self-styled philosophy—and from a pithless orthodoxy. It had too little of God in it for the former; too much for the latter.

The charge of *Atheism*, which used often to be brought against philosophy (that it has *too little* of God), has grown rare: the more widespread grows the charge of *Pantheism*, that it has *too much* of him: so much so, that it is treated not so much as an imputation, but as a proved fact, or a sheer fact which needs no proof. Piety, in particular, which with its pious airs of superiority fancies itself free to dispense with proof, goes hand in hand with empty rationalism—which means to be so much opposed to it, though both repose really on the same habit of mind—in the wanton assertion, almost as if it merely mentioned a notorious fact, that Philosophy is the All-one doctrine, or Pantheism. It must be said that it was more to the credit of piety and theology when they accused a philosophical system (e.g., Spinozism) of Atheism than of Pantheism, though the former imputation at the first glance looks

more cruel and insidious. The imputation of Atheism presupposes a definite idea of a full and real God, and arises because the popular idea does not detect in the philosophical notion the peculiar form to which it is attached. Philosophy indeed can recognize its own forms in the categories of religious consciousness, and even its own teaching in the doctrine of religion—which therefore it does not disparage. But the converse is not true: the religious consciousness does not apply the criticism of thought to itself, does not comprehend itself, and is therefore, as it stands, exclusive. To impute Pantheism instead of Atheism to Philosophy is part of the modern habit of mind—of the new piety and new theology. For them philosophy has too much of God: so much so, that, if we believe them, it asserts that God is everything and everything is God. This new theology, which makes religion only a subjective feeling and denies the knowledge of the divine nature, thus retains nothing more than a God in general without objective characteristics. Without interest of its own for the concrete, fulfilled notion of God, it treats it only as an interest which *others* once had, and hence treats what belongs to the doctrine of God's concrete nature as something merely historical. The indeterminate God is to be found in all religions; every kind of piety—that of the Hindu to asses, cows—or to dalai-lamas—that of the Egyptians to the ox—is always adoration of an object which, with all its absurdities, also contains the generic abstract, God in General. If this theory needs no more than such a God, so as to find God in everything called religion, it must at least find such a God recognized even in philosophy, and can no longer accuse it of Atheism. The mitigation of the reproach of Atheism into that of Pantheism has its ground therefore in the superficial idea to which this mildness has attenuated and emptied God. As that popular idea clings to its abstract universality, from which all definite quality is excluded, all such definiteness is only the non-divine, the secularity of things, thus left standing in fixed undisturbed substantiality. On such a presupposition, even after philosophy has maintained God's absolute universality, and the consequent untruth of the being of external things, the hearer clings as he did before to his belief that secular things still keep their being, and form all that is definite in the divine universality. He thus changes that universality into what he calls the pantheistic: *Everything is*—(empirical things, without distinction, whether higher or lower in the scale, are)—all possess substantiality; and so—thus he understands philosophy—each and every



secular thing is God. It is only his own stupidity, and the falsifications due to such misconception, which generate the imagination and the allegation of such pantheism.

But if those who give out that a certain philosophy is Pantheism, are unable and unwilling to see this—for it is just to see the notion that they refuse—they should before everything have verified the alleged fact that *any one philosopher, or any one man*, had really ascribed substantial or objective and inherent reality to all things and regarded them as God: that such an idea had ever come into the head of anybody but themselves. This allegation I will further elucidate in this exoteric discussion: and the only way to do so is to set down the evidence. If we want to take so-called Pantheism in its most poetical, most sublime, or if you will, its grossest shape, we must, as is well known, consult the oriental poets: and the most copious delineations of it are found in Hindu literature. Amongst the abundant resources, open to our disposal on this topic, I select—as the most authentic statement accessible—the *Bhagavat-Gita*, and amongst its effusions, prolix and reiterative *ad nauseam*, some of the most telling passages. In the 10th Lesson (in Schlegel, p. 162) Krishna says of himself: “I am the self, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end also of all beings ... I am the beaming sun amongst the shining ones, and the moon amongst the lunar mansions.... Amongst the Vedas I am the Sama-Veda: I am mind amongst the senses: I am consciousness in living beings. And I am Shankara (Shiva) among the Rudra ... Meru among the high-topped mountains.... the Himalaya among the firmly-fixed (mountains).... Among beasts I am the lord of beasts.... Among letters I am the letter A.... I am the spring among the seasons.... I am also that which is the seed of all things: there is nothing moveable or immoveable which can exist without me.”

Even in these totally sensuous delineations, Krishna (and we must not suppose there is, besides Krishna, still God, or a God besides; as he said before he was Shiva, or Indra, so it is afterwards said that Brahma too is in him) makes himself out to be—not everything, but only the most excellent of everything. Everywhere there is a distinction drawn between external, unessential existences, and one essential amongst them, which he is. Even when, at the beginning of the passage, he is said to be the beginning, middle, and end of living things, this totality is distinguished from the living things themselves as single existences.

Even such a picture which extends deity far and wide in its existence cannot be called pantheism: we must rather say that in the infinitely multiple empirical world, everything is reduced to a limited number of essential existences, to a polytheism. But even what has been quoted shows that these very substantialities of the externally existent do not retain the independence entitling them to be named Gods; even Shiva, Indra, etc. melt into the one Krishna.

This reduction is more expressly made in the following scene (7th Lesson, pp. 7 seqq.). Krishna says: "I am the producer and the destroyer of the whole universe. There is nothing else higher than myself; all this is woven upon me, like numbers of pearls upon a thread. I am the taste in water ... I am the light of the sun and the moon; I am *Om* in all the Vedas ... I am life in all beings ... I am the discernment of the discerning ones ... I am also the strength of the strong." Then he adds: "The whole universe deluded by these three states of mind developed from the qualities [sc. goodness, passion, darkness] does not know me who am beyond them and inexhaustible: for this delusion of mine [even the *Maya* is *his*, nothing independent], developed from the qualities is divine and difficult to transcend. Those cross beyond this delusion who resort to me alone." Then the picture gathers itself up in a simple expression. "At the end of many lives, the man possessed of knowledge approaches me, (believing) that Vasudeva is everything. Such a high-souled mind is very hard to find. Those who are deprived of knowledge by various desires approach other divinities ... Whichever form of deity one worships with faith, from it he obtains the beneficial things he desires really given by me. But the fruit thus obtained by those of little judgement is perishable ... The undiscerning ones, not knowing my transcendent and inexhaustible essence, than which there is nothing higher, think me who am unperceived to have become perceptible."

This "All," which Krishna calls himself, is not, any more than the Eleatic One, and the Spinozan Substance, the Everything. This everything, rather, the infinitely manifold sensuous manifold of the finite is in all these pictures, but defined as the "accidental," without essential being of its very own, but having its truth in the substance, the One which, as different from that accidental, is alone the divine and God. Hinduism, however, has the higher conception of Brahma, the pure unity of thought in itself, where the empirical everything of the world, as also those proximate substantialities, called Gods, vanish. On that

account Colebrooke and many others have described the Hindu religion as at bottom a Monotheism. That this description is not incorrect is clear from these short citations. But so little concrete is this divine unity—spiritual as its idea of God is—so powerless its grip, so to speak—that Hinduism, with a monstrous inconsistency, is also the maddest of polytheisms. But the idolatry of the wretched Hindu, when he adores the ape, or other creature, is still a long way from that wretched fancy of a Pantheism, to which everything is God, and God everything. Hindu monotheism, moreover, is itself an example how little comes of mere monotheism, if the Idea of God is not deeply determinate in itself. For that unity, if it be intrinsically abstract and therefore empty, tends of itself to let whatever is concrete, outside it—be it as a lot of Gods or as secular, empirical individuals—keep its independence. That pantheism indeed—on the shallow conception of it—might with a show of logic as well be called a monotheism: for if God, as it says, is identical with the world, then as there is only one world there would be in that pantheism only one God. Perhaps the empty numerical unity must be predicated of the world: but such abstract predication of it has no further special interest; on the contrary, a mere numerical unity just means that its *content* is an infinite multitude and variety of finitudes. But it is that delusion with the empty unity, which alone makes possible and induces the wrong idea of pantheism. It is only the picture—floating in the indefinite blue—of the world as *one thing, the all*, that could ever be considered capable of combining with God: only on that assumption could philosophy be supposed to teach that God is the World: for if the world were taken as it is, as everything, as the endless lot of empirical existence, then it would hardly have been even held possible to suppose a pantheism which asserted of such stuff that it is God.

But to go back again to the question of fact. If we want to see the consciousness of the One—not as with the Hindus split between the featureless unity of abstract thought, on one hand, and on the other, the long-winded weary story of its particular detail, but—in its finest purity and sublimity, we must consult the Mohammedans. If, e.g., in the excellent Jelaeddin-Rumi in particular, we find the unity of the soul with the One set forth, and that unity described as love, this spiritual unity is an exaltation above the finite and vulgar, a transfiguration of the natural and the spiritual, in which the externalism and transitoriness of immediate nature, and of empirical secular spirit, is discarded and absorbed.

I refrain from accumulating further examples of the religious and poetic conceptions which it is customary to call pantheistic. Of the philosophies to which that name is given, the Eleatic, or Spinozist, it has been remarked earlier that so far are they from identifying God with the world and making him finite, that in these systems this "everything" has no truth, and that we should rather call them monotheistic, or, in relation to the popular idea of the world, acosmical. They are most accurately called systems which apprehend the Absolute only as substance. Of the oriental, especially the Mohammedan, modes of envisaging God, we may rather say that they represent the Absolute as the utterly universal genus which dwells in the species or existences, but dwells so potently that these existences have no actual reality. The fault of all these modes of thought and systems is that they stop short of defining substance as subject and as mind.

These systems and modes of pictorial conception originate from the one need common to all philosophies and all religions of getting an idea of God, and, secondly, of the relationship of God and the world. (In philosophy it is specially made out that the determination of God's nature determines his relations with the world.) The "reflective" understanding begins by rejecting all systems and modes of conception, which, whether they spring from heart, imagination, or speculation, express the interconnection of God and the world: and in order to have God pure in faith or consciousness, he is as essence parted from appearance, as infinite from the finite. But, after this partition, the conviction arises also that the appearance has a relation to the essence, the finite to the infinite, and so on, and thus arises the question of reflection as to the nature of this relation. It is in the reflective form that the whole difficulty of the affair lies, and that causes this relation to be called incomprehensible by the agnostic. The close of philosophy is not the place, even in a general exoteric discussion, to waste a word on what a "notion" means. But as the view taken of this relation is closely connected with the view taken of philosophy generally and with all amputations against it, we may still add the remark that though philosophy certainly has to do with unity in general, it is not, however, with abstract unity, mere identity, and the empty absolute, but with concrete unity (the notion), and that in its whole course it has to do with nothing else; that each step in its advance is a peculiar term or phase of this concrete unity, and that the

deepest and last expression of unity is the unity of absolute mind itself. Would-be judges and critics of philosophy might be recommended to familiarize themselves with these phases of unity and to take the trouble to get acquainted with them, at least to know so much that of these terms there are a great many, and that amongst them there is great variety. But they show so little acquaintance with them—and still less take trouble about it—that, when they hear of unity—and relation *ipso facto* implies unity—they rather stick fast at quite abstract indeterminate unity, and lose sight of the chief point of interest—the special mode in which the unity is qualified. Hence all they can say about philosophy is that dry identity is its principle and result, and that it is the system of identity. Sticking fast to the undigested thought of identity, they have laid hands on, not the concrete unity, the notion and content of philosophy, but rather its reverse. In the philosophical field they proceed, as in the physical field the physicist; who also is well aware that he has before him a variety of sensuous properties and matters—or usually matters alone (for the properties get transformed into matters also for the physicist)—and that these matters (elements) *also* stand in *relation* to one another. But the question is: Of what kind is this relation? Every peculiarity and the whole difference of natural things, inorganic and living, depend solely on the different modes of this unity. But instead of ascertaining these different modes, the ordinary physicist (chemist included) takes up only one, the most external and the worst, viz. *composition*, applies only it in the whole range of natural structures, which he thus renders for ever inexplicable.

The aforesaid shallow pantheism is an equally obvious inference from this shallow identity. All that those who employ this invention of their own to accuse philosophy gather from the study of God's *relation* to the world is that the one, but only the one factor of this category of relation—and that the factor of indeterminateness—is identity. Thereupon they stick fast in this half-perception, and assert—falsely as a fact—that philosophy teaches the identity of God and the world. And as in their judgment either of the two—the world as much as God—has the same solid substantiality as the other, they infer that in the philosophic Idea God is *composed of* God and the world. Such then is the idea they form of pantheism, and which they ascribe to philosophy. Unaccustomed in their own thinking and apprehending of thoughts to go beyond such categories, they import them into philosophy, where they are utterly

unknown; they thus infect it with the disease against which they subsequently raise an outcry. If any difficulty emerge in comprehending God's relation to the world, they at once and very easily escape it by admitting that this relation contains for them an inexplicable contradiction; and that hence, they must stop at the vague conception of such relation, perhaps under the more familiar names of, e.g., omnipresence, providence, etc. Faith in their use of the term means no more than a refusal to define the conception, or to enter on a closer discussion of the problem. That men and classes of untrained intellect are satisfied with such indefiniteness, is what one expects; but when a trained intellect and an interest for reflective study is satisfied, in matters admitted to be of superior, if not even of supreme interest, with indefinite ideas, it is hard to decide whether the thinker is really in earnest with the subject. But if those who cling to this crude "rationalism" were in earnest, e.g., with God's omnipresence, so far as to realize their faith thereon in a definite mental idea, in what difficulties would they be involved by their belief in the true reality of the things of sense! They would hardly like, as Epicurus does, to let God dwell in the interspaces of things, i.e., in the pores of the physicists—said pores being the negative, something supposed to exist *beside* the material reality. This very "beside" would give their pantheism its spatiality—their everything, conceived as the mutual exclusion of parts in space. But in ascribing to God, in his relation to the world, an action on and in the space thus filled on the world and in it, they would endlessly split up the divine actuality into infinite materiality. They would really thus have the misconception they call pantheism or all-one-doctrine, only as the necessary sequel of their misconceptions of God and the world. But to put that sort of thing, this stale gossip of oneness or identity, on the shoulders of philosophy, shows such recklessness about justice and truth that it can only be explained through the difficulty of getting into the head thoughts and notions, i.e., not abstract unity, but the many-shaped modes specified. If statements as to facts are put forward, and the facts in question are thoughts and notions, it is indispensable to get hold of their meaning. But even the fulfillment of this requirement has been rendered superfluous, now that it has long been a foregone conclusion that philosophy is pantheism, a system of identity, an All-one doctrine, and that the person therefore who might be unaware of this fact is treated either as merely unaware of a matter of common notoriety, or as prevaricating for a

purpose. On account of this chorus of assertions, then, I have believed myself obliged to speak at more length and exoterically on the outward and inward untruth of this alleged fact: for exoteric discussion is the only method available in dealing with the external apprehension of notions as mere facts—by which notions are perverted into their opposite. The esoteric study of God and identity, as of cognitions and notions, is philosophy itself.

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## Lectures on the History of Philosophy\*

### **Oriental Philosophy**

The first Philosophy in order is the so-called Oriental, which, however, does not enter into the substance or range of our subject as represented here. Its position is preliminary, and we only deal with it at all in order to account for not treating of it at greater length, and to show in what relation it stands to Thought and to true Philosophy. The expression Eastern philosophy is specially employed in reference to the period in which this great universal Oriental conception aroused the East—the land of circumscription and of limitation, where the spirit of subjectivity reigns. More particularly in the first centuries of Christendom—that significant period—did these great Oriental ideas penetrate into Italy; and in the Gnostic philosophy they began to force the idea of the illimitable into the Western mind, until in the Church the latter again succeeded in obtaining the ascendancy and hence in firmly establishing the Divine. That which we call Eastern Philosophy is more properly the

\* From *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane, vol. 1, 3 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1892), "Oriental Philosophy: Introduction." Part B, "Indian Philosophy," pp. 117--19; 125--47.



religious mode of thought and the conception of the world belonging generally to the Orientals and approximates very closely to Philosophy; and to consider the Oriental idea of religion just as if it were religious philosophy, is to give the main reason why it is so like.

We do not similarly maintain that the Roman, Greek, and Christian Religions constitute Philosophy. These bear all the less similarity thereto in that the Greek and Roman gods as also Christ and the God of the Jews, on account of the principle of individual freedom which penetrates the Greek and still more the Christian element, make their appearance immediately as the explicit, personal forms, which, being mythological or Christian, must first be themselves interpreted and changed into a philosophic form. In the case of Eastern Religion, on the contrary, we are much more directly reminded of the philosophic conception, for since in the East the element of subjectivity has not come forth, religious ideas are not individualized, and we have predominating a kind of universal ideas, which hence present the appearance of being philosophic ideas and thoughts. The Orientals certainly have also individual forms, such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, but because freedom is wanting the individuality is not real, but merely superficial. And so much is this the case, that when we suppose that we have to deal with a human form, the same loses itself again and expands into the illimitable. Just as we hear amongst the Greeks of a Uranus and Chronos—of Time individualized—we find with the Persians, Zeroane Akerene, but it is Time unlimited. We find Ormuzd and Ahriman to be altogether general forms and ideas; they appear to be universal principles which thus seem to bear a relationship to Philosophy or even seem to be themselves philosophic.

Just as the content of the Eastern religions, God, the essentially existent, the eternal, is comprehended somewhat in the light of universal, we find the relative positions of individuals to Him to be the same. In the Eastern religions the first condition is that only the one substance shall, as such, be the true, and that the individual neither can have within himself, nor can he attain to any value in as far as he maintains himself as against the being in and for itself. He can have true value only through an identification with this substance in which he ceases to exist as subject and disappears into unconsciousness. In the Greek and Christian Religion, on the other hand, the subject knows himself to be free and must be maintained as such;

and because the individual in this way makes himself independent, it is undoubtedly much more difficult for Thought to free itself from this individuality and to constitute itself in independence. The higher point of view implicitly contained in the Greek individual freedom, this happier, larger life, makes more difficult the work of Thought, which is to give due value to the universal. In the East, on the contrary, the substantial in Religion is certainly on its own view the principal matter, the essential—and with it lawlessness, the absence of individual consciousness is immediately connected—and this substance is undoubtedly a philosophic idea. The negation of the finite is also present, but in such a manner that the individual only reaches to its freedom in this unity with the substantial. In as far as in the Eastern mind, reflection, consciousness come through thought to distinction and to the determination of principles, there exist such categories and such definite ideas not in unity with the substantial. The destruction of all that is particular either is an illimitable, the exaltitude of the East, or, in so far as that which is posited and determined for itself is known, it is a dry, dead understanding, which cannot take up the speculative Notion into itself. To that which is true, this finite can exist only as immersed in substance; if kept apart from this it remains dead and arid. We thus find only dry understanding amongst the Easterns, a mere enumeration of determinations, a logic like the Wolffian of old. It is the same as in their worship, which is complete immersion in devotion and then an endless number of ceremonials and of religious actions; and this on the other side is the exaltitude of that illimitable in which everything disappears [...].

### Indian Philosophy

If we had formerly the satisfaction of believing in the antiquity of the Indian wisdom and of holding it in respect, we now have ascertained through being acquainted with the great astronomical works of the Indians, the inaccuracy of all figures quoted. Nothing can be more confused, nothing more imperfect than the chronology of the Indians; no people which has attained to culture in astronomy, mathematics, etc., is as incapable for history; in it they have neither stability nor coherence. It was believed that such was to be had in the time of Vikramaditya, who was supposed to have lived about 50 B.C., and under whose reign

the poet Kalidasa, author of *Shakuntala*, lived. But further research discovered half a dozen Vikramadityas and careful investigation has placed this epoch in our eleventh century. The Indians have lines of kings and an enormous quantity of names, but everything is vague.

We know how the ancient glory of this land was held in the highest estimation even by the Greeks, just as they knew about the Gymnosophists, who were excellent men, though people ventured to call them otherwise—men who having dedicated themselves to a contemplative life, lived in abstraction from external life, and hence, wandering about in hordes, like the Cynics renounced all ordinary desires. These latter in their capacity as philosophers, were also more especially known to the Greeks, inasmuch as Philosophy is also supposed to exist in this abstraction, in which all the relationships of ordinary life are set aside; and this abstraction is a feature which we wish to bring into prominence and consider.

Indian culture is developed to a high degree, and it is imposing, but its Philosophy is identical with its Religion, and the objects to which attention is devoted in Philosophy are the same as those which we find brought forward in Religion. Hence the holy books or Vedas also form the general groundwork for Philosophy. We know the Vedas tolerably well; they contain principally prayers addressed to the many representations of God, direction as to ceremonials, offerings, etc. They are also of the most various periods; many parts are very ancient, and others have taken their origin later, as, for instance, that which treats of the service of Vishnu. The Vedas even constitute the basis for the atheistical Indian philosophies; these, too, are not wanting in gods, and they pay genuine attention to the Vedas. Indian Philosophy thus stands within Religion just as scholastic Philosophy stands within Christian dogmatism, having at its basis and presupposing the doctrines of the church. Mythology takes the form of incarnation or individualization, from which it might be thought that it would be opposed to Philosophy in its universality and ideality; incarnation is not, however, here taken in so definite a sense, for almost everything is supposed to partake of it, and the very thing that seems to define itself as individuality falls back directly within the mist of the universal. The idea of the Indians more appropriately expressed, is that there is one universal substance which may be laid hold of in the abstract or in the concrete, and out of which everything takes its origin. The

summit of man's attainment is that he as consciousness should make himself identical with the substance, in Religion by means of worship, offerings, and rigid acts of expiation, and in Philosophy through the instrumentality of pure thought.

It is quite recently that we first obtained a definite knowledge of Indian Philosophy; in the main we understand by it religious ideas, but in modern times men have learned to recognize real philosophic writings. Colebrooke, in particular, communicated abstracts to us from two Indian philosophic works, and this forms the first contribution we have had in reference to Indian Philosophy. What Frederick von Schlegel says about the wisdom of the Indians is taken from their religious ideas only. He is one of the first Germans who took up his attention with Indian philosophy, yet his work bore little fruit because he himself read no more than the index to the *Ramayana*. According to the abstract before mentioned, the Indians possess ancient philosophic systems; one part of these they consider to be orthodox, and those which tally with the Vedas are particularly included; the others are held to be heterodox and as not corresponding with the teaching of the holy books. The one part, which really is orthodox, has no other purpose than to make the deliverances of the Vedas clearer, or to derive from the text of these original treatises an ingeniously thought-out Psychology. This system is called Mimansa, and two schools proceed from it. Distinguished from these there are other systems, amongst which the two chief are those of the Sankhya and Nyaya. The former again divides into two parts which are, however, different in form only. The Nyaya is the most developed; it more particularly gives the rules for reasoning, and may be compared to the Logic of Aristotle. Colebrooke has made abstracts from both of these systems, and he says that there are many ancient treatises upon them, and that the *versus memoriales* from them are very extensive.

## 1. The Sankhya Philosophy of Kapila

The originator of the Sankhya is called Kapila, and he was an ancient sage of whom it was said that he was a son of Brahma, and one of the seven great Holy men; others say that he was an incarnation of Vishnu, like his disciple Asuri, and that he was identified with fire. As to the age of the Aphorisms (Sutras) of Kapila, Colebrooke can say nothing;

he merely mentions that they were already mentioned in other very ancient books, but he does not feel able to say anything definite in the matter. The Sankhya, is divided into different schools, of which there are two or three, which, however, differ from one another only in a few particulars. It is held to be partly heterodox and partly orthodox.

The real aim of all Indian schools and systems of Philosophy, whether atheistic or theistic, is to teach the means whereby eternal happiness can be attained before, as well as after, death. The Vedas say, "What has to be known is the Soul; it must be distinguished from nature, and hence it will never come again." That means that it is exempt from metempsychosis and likewise from bodily form, so that it does not after death make its appearance in another body. This blessed condition therefore is, according to the Sankhya, a perfect and eternal release from every kind of ill. It reads: "Through Thought, the true Science, this freedom can be accomplished; the temporal and worldly means of procuring enjoyment and keeping off spiritual or bodily evil are insufficient; even the methods advocated by the Vedas are not effectual for the purpose, and these are found in the revealed form of worship, or in the performance of religious ceremonies as directed in the Vedas." The offering up of animals is specially valuable as such a means; and in this regard the Sankhya rejects the Vedas; such an offering is not pure, because it is connected with the death of animals, and the main tenet in the former is not to injure any animal. Other methods of deliverance from evil are in the excessive acts of penance performed by the Indians, to which a retreat within themselves is added. Now when the Indian thus internally collects himself, and retreats within his own thoughts, the moment of such pure concentration is called *Brahma[n]*, the one and the clearly supersensuous state, which the understanding calls the highest possible existence. When this is so with me, then am I *Brahma[n]*. Such a retreat into Thought takes place in the Religion as well as in the Philosophy of the Indians, and they assert with reference to this state of bliss that it is what is highest of all, and that even the gods do not attain to it. Indra, for example, the god of the visible heavens, is much lower than the soul in this life of internal contemplation; many thousand Indras have passed away, but the soul is exempt from every change. The Sankhya, only differs from Religion in that it has a complete system of thought or logic, and that the abstraction is not made a reduction to what is empty, but is raised up into the significance

of a determinate thought. This science is stated to subsist in the correct knowledge of the principles—which may be outwardly perceptible or not—of the material and of the immaterial world.

The Sankhya system separates itself into three parts: the method of knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the determinate form of the knowledge of principles.

*a.* As regards the methods of obtaining knowledge, the Sankhya says that there are three kinds of evidence possible: first of all, that of perception; secondly, that of inference; thirdly, that of affirmation which is the origin of all others, such as reverence for authority, a teachable disposition, and tradition. Perception is said to require no explanation. Inference is a conclusion arrived at from the operation of cause and effect, by which one determination merely passes over into a second. There are three forms, because inferences are made either from cause to effect, from effect to cause, or in accordance with different relations of cause and effect. Rain, we may say, is foretold when a cloud is seen to be gathering; fire, when a hill is seen to be smoking; or the movement of the moon is inferred when, at different times, it is observed to be in different places. These are simple, dry relations, originating from the understanding. Under affirmation, tradition or revelation is understood, such as that of the orthodox Vedas; in a wider sense, immediate certainty or the affirmation in my consciousness, and in a less wide sense, an assurance through verbal communication or through tradition is so denominated.

*b.* Of objects of knowledge or of principles, the Sankhya gives five-and-twenty; and these I will mention to show the want of order that is in them.

1. Nature, as the origin of everything, is said to be the universal, the material cause, eternal matter, undistinguished and undistinguishable, without parts, productive but without production, absolute substance.

2. Intelligence, the first production of Nature and itself producing other principles, distinguishable as three gods through the efficacy of three qualities, which are Goodness, Foulness, and Darkness. These form one person and three gods, namely, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara.

3. Consciousness, personality, the belief that in all perceptions and meditations I am present, that the objects of sense, as well as of intelligence, concern me, in short that I am I. It issues from the power of intelligence, and itself brings forth the following principles.

4-8. Five very subtle particles, rudiments, or atoms, which are only perceptible to an existence of a higher order, and not through the senses of men; these proceed from the principle of consciousness, and bring forth on their own account the five elements—space and the first origination of earth, water, fire, and air.

9-19. The eleven succeeding principles are the organs of feeling, which are produced by the personality. There are ten external organs, comprising the five senses and five active organs—the organs of the voice, hands, and feet, the excretory and genital organs. The eleventh organ is that of the inward sense.

20-24. These principles are the five elements brought forth from the earlier-named rudiments—the ether which takes possession of space, air, fire, water, and earth.

25. The soul.

In this very unsystematic form we see only the first beginnings of reflection, which seem to be put together as a universal. But this arrangement is, to say nothing of being unsystematic, not even intelligent.

Formerly the principles were outside of and successive to one another; their unity is found in the Soul. It is said of the latter that it is not produced, and is not productive; it is individual, and hence there are many souls; it is sentient, eternal, immaterial, and unchangeable. Colebrooke here distinguishes between the theistic and atheistic systems of the Sankhya, since the former not only admits of individual souls, but also upholds God (Ishwara) as the ruler of the world. The knowledge of the soul still remains the principal point. It is through the consideration of nature and through abstraction from nature that the unity of the soul with nature is brought about, just as the lame man and the blind are brought together for the purposes of transport and of guidance—the one being the bearer and being directed (nature?), the other being borne and guiding (soul?). Through the union of Soul and Nature, the creation is effected, and this consists in the development of intelligence and of other principles. This unity is the actual support for that which is, and the means by which it is so maintained. It is at the same time an important consideration that the negation of the object which is contained in thought, is necessary in order to comprehend; this reflection has far more depth than the ordinary talk about immediate consciousness. The view is superficial

and perverted which maintains the Easterns to have lived in unity with nature; the soul in its activity, mind, is indeed undoubtedly in relation with nature and in unity with the truth of nature. But this true unity essentially contains the moment of the negation of nature as it is in its immediacy; such an immediate unity is merely the life of animals, the life and perception of the senses. The idea which is present to the Indians is thus indeed the unity of nature and of soul, but the spiritual is only one with nature in so far as it is within itself, and at the same time manifests the natural as negative. As regards the creation, this is further signified. The soul's desire and end is for satisfaction and freedom, and with this view it is endowed with a subtle environment, in which all the above-mentioned principles are contained, but only in their elementary development. Something of our ideal, or of the implicit is present in this idea; it is like the blossom which is ideally in the bud, and yet is not actual and real. The expression for this is *Lingam*, the generative power of nature, which holds a high place in the estimation of all Indians. This subtle form, says the *Sankhya*, also assumes a coarse bodily shape, and clothes itself in several garbs; and as a means of preventing the descent into a coarse materiality, philosophic contemplation is recommended.

Hitherto we have observed the abstract principles; the following is to be noticed regarding the creation of the concrete actuality of the universe. The bodily creation consists of the soul habited in a material body; it comprehends eight orders of higher beings and five orders of lower beings, which constitute—with men, who form a single class—fourteen orders, and these are divided into three worlds or classes. The first eight orders have appellations which appear in Indian mythology, viz., *Brahma*, *Prajapati*, *Indra*, etc.; there are both gods and demi-gods, and *Brahma* himself is represented here as if he were created. The five lower orders are composed of animals: the four-footed animals are in two classes, birds come third, reptiles, fishes, and insects fourth, and, finally, vegetable and inorganic nature comes fifth. The abode of the eight higher classes is in heaven; they are, it is said, in the enjoyment of that which is good and virtuous, and consequently are happy, though still they are but imperfect and transient; underneath is the seat of darkness or delusion, where beings of the lower orders live; and between is the world of men, where untruth or passion reigns.



Against these three worlds, which have their place in the material creation, the system places yet another creation, and that is the Intellectual, consisting of the powers of understanding and the senses. These last are again divided into four classes, viz., those determinations which impede, those which incapacitate, those which satisfy, and those which perfect the intelligence. 1. Sixty-two of the impeding determinations are adduced; eight kinds of error, as many of opinion or of illusion, ten of passion as being illusion carried to extremity, eighteen of hate or sullenness, and the same of grief. Here there is shown somewhat of an empirical, psychological, and observing mode of treatment. 2. The incapacity of intelligence has again eight-and-twenty variations: injury, want of organs, etc. 3. Satisfaction is either inward or outward. The inward satisfaction is four-fold; the first concerns nature, the whole universal or substantial, and is set forth in the opinion that philosophic knowledge is a modification of the principle of nature itself, with which there is immediately united the anticipation of a liberty given through the act of nature; yet the true liberty is not to be expected as an act of nature, for it is the soul which has to bring forth that liberty through itself and through its thinking activity. The second satisfaction is in the belief of securing liberty through ascetic exercises, pains, torments, and penances. The third has to do with time—the idea that liberty will come in the course of time and without study. The fourth satisfaction is obtained in a belief in luck—in believing that liberty depends on fate. The external mode of obtaining satisfaction relates to continence from enjoyment, but continence from sensuous motives, such as dislike to the unrest of acquisition, and fear of the evil consequences of enjoyment. 4. There are, again, several means of perfecting the intelligence adduced, and, amongst others, there is the direct psychological mode of perfecting mind, as is seen in the act of reasoning, in friendly converse, and so on. This we may find, indeed, in our applied logic.

There is still somewhat to be remarked as to the main points of the system. The Sankhya, and likewise the other Indian systems of Philosophy, occupy themselves particularly with the three qualities (Guna) of the absolute Idea, which are represented as substances and as modifications of nature. It is noteworthy that in the observing consciousness of the Indians it struck them that what is true and in and for itself contains three determinations, and the Notion of the Idea is

perfected in three moments. This sublime consciousness of the trinity, which we find again in Plato and others, then went astray in the region of thinking contemplation, and retains its place only in Religion, and there but as a Beyond. Then the understanding penetrated through it, declaring it to be senseless; and it was Kant who broke open the road once more to its comprehension. The reality and totality of the Notion of everything, considered in its substance, is absorbed by the triad of determinations; and it has become the business of our times to bring this to consciousness. With the Indians, this consciousness proceeded from sensuous observation merely, and they now further define these qualities as follows: The first and highest is with them the Good (*Sattva*); it is exalted and illuminating—allied to joy and felicity—and piety predominates within it. It prevails in fire, and therefore flames rise up and sparks fly upwards; if it has ascendancy in men, as it does have in the eight higher orders, it is the origin of virtue. This also is the universal—throughout and in every aspect the affirmative—in abstract form. The second and mediate quality is deceit or passion (*Rajas*, *Tejas*) which for itself is blind; it is that which is impure, harmful, hateful; it is active, vehement, and restless, allied to evil and misfortune, being prevalent in the air, on which account the wind moves transversely; amongst living beings it is the cause of vice. The third and last quality is darkness (*Tamas*); it is inert and obstructive, allied to care, dullness, and disappointment, predominating in earth and water, and hence these fall down and tend ever downwards. With living beings stupidity takes its origin in this. The first quality is thus the unity with itself; the second the manifestation or the principle of difference, desire, disunion, as wickedness; the third, however, is mere negation, as in mythology it is concretely represented in the form of Shiva, Mahadeva, or Maheshwara, the god of change or destruction. As far as we are concerned, the important distinction is that the third principle is not the return to the first which Mind and Idea demand, and which is effected by the removal of the negation in order to effect a reconciliation with itself and to go back within itself. With the Indians the third is still change and negation.

These three qualities are represented as the essential being of nature. The Sankhya says, "We speak of them as we do of the trees in a wood." Yet this is a bad simile, for the wood is but an abstract universal, in which the individuals are independent. In the religious ideas of the Vedas,

where these qualities also appear as Trimurti, they are spoken of as if they were successive modifications, so that "Everything was darkness first, then received the command to transform itself, and in this manner the form"—which, however, is a worse one—"of movement and activity (foulness) was assumed, until finally, by yet another command from Brahma, the form of goodness was adopted."

Further determinations of the intelligence in respect of these qualities follow. It is said that eight kinds of intelligence are counted, of which four pertain to what is good: virtue first, science and knowledge second, thirdly, freedom from passion, which may have either an external and sensuous motive—the repugnance to disturbance—or be of an intellectual nature, and emanate from the conviction that nature is a dream, a mere jugglery and sham; the fourth is power. This last is eight-fold, and hence eight special qualities are given as being present; viz., the power to contract oneself into a quite small form, for which everything shall be penetrable; the power to expand into a gigantic body; the power to become light enough to be able to mount to the sun on a sunbeam; the possession of unlimited power of action in the organs, so that with the finger-tips the moon may be touched—irresistible will, so that, for instance, one may dive into the earth as easily as in the water; mastery over all living and lifeless existence; the power to change the course of nature; and the power to perform everything that is wished. "The feeling that such transcendent power," Colebrooke goes on, "is within the reach of man in his life is not peculiar to the Sankhya sect, but is common to all systems and religious ideas, and such a power is in good faith ascribed to many holy men and Brahmins in dramas and popular narratives." Sensuous evidence is of no account as opposed to this, for with the Indian, perception of the senses is, generally speaking, absent; everything adopts the form of imaginary images, every dream is esteemed just as much as truth and actuality. The Sankhya ascribes this power to man, in so far as he elevates himself through the working of his thought into inward subjectivity. Colebrooke says, "The Yoga-shastra names in one of its four chapters a number of acts by which such power may be attained; these are exemplified by a profound meditation, accompanied by holding back the breath and inactivity of the senses, while a fixed position is constantly preserved. By means of such acts the adept reaches the knowledge of all that is past as well as future; he has learned to divine the thoughts of others, to have the strength of

elephants, the courage of lions, the swiftness of the wind, the power to fly in the, air, to swim in the water, to dive into the earth, to behold every possible world in one moment, and to accomplish other wonderful deeds. But the quickest mode of reaching happiness through deep contemplation is that worship of God which consists in ever murmuring the mystic name of God, 'Om.'" This idea is a very general one.

Colebrooke deals more particularly with the theistic and atheistic divisions of the Sankhya as distinguished. While in the theistic system, Ishwara, the chief ruler of the world, is a soul or spirit distinguished from the other souls, Kapila, in the atheistic Sankhya, disowns Ishwara, the originator of the world by volition, alleging that there is no proof of the existence of God, since it is not shown by perception, nor is it possible that it should be deduced from argument. He recognizes, indeed, an existence proceeding from nature which is Absolute Intelligence, the source of all individual intelligences and the origin of all other existences, which gradually develop out of it: about the Creator of the world, understanding this to be creation, he emphatically remarks that "the truth of such an Ishwara is proved." But, he says, "the existence of effects depends on the soul, on consciousness, and not on Ishwara. Everything proceeds from the great Principle, which is Intelligence"; to this the individual soul belongs, and through this it is brought about.

c. As to the third division of the Sankhya, the more particular consideration of the forms of knowledge as regards the principle, I shall make a few more remarks, which may perhaps have some interest. Of the various kinds of knowledge already given, that of reasoning, of the connection existing with the conclusion through the relation of cause and effect, remains the chief, and I will show how the Indians comprehend this relation. The understanding and all other principles derived from it are to them effects, and from these they reason to their causes; in one respect this is analogous to our inference, but in another different. They perceive that "effects exist even before the operation of the causes; for what does not exist cannot be made explicit in existence through causality." Colebrooke says, "This means that effects are educts rather than products." But the question is just what products are. As an example of how the effect is already contained in the cause, the following is given—Oil is already existent in the seeds of sesame before it is pressed out; rice is in the husk before it is thrashed; milk is in the udder of the cow before it is milked. Cause

and effect are in reality the same; a piece of a dress is not really different from the yarn from which it is woven, for the material is the same. This is how this relation is understood. A consequence derived from it was the eternity of the world, for the saying "Out of nothing there comes nothing," which Colebrooke also mentions, is opposed to the belief in a creation of the world from nothing in our religious sense. As a matter of fact, it must also be said, "God creates the world not out of nothing, but out of Himself; it is His own determination, by Him brought into existence." The distinction between cause and effect is only a formal distinction; it is the understanding that keeps them separate, and not reason. Moisture is the same as rain; or again we speak in mechanics of different movements, whereas motion has the same velocity before as after impact. The ordinary consciousness cannot comprehend the fact that there is no real distinction between cause and effect.

The Indians infer the existence of "a universal cause which is undistinguishable, while determinate things are finite," and on this account there must be a cause permeating through them. Even intelligence is an effect of this cause, which is the soul in so far as it is creative in this identity with nature after its abstraction from it. Effect proceeds from cause, yet, on the other hand, this last is not independent, but goes back into universal cause. General destruction is postulated along with what is called the creation of the three worlds. Just as the tortoise stretches out its limbs and then draws them back again within its shell, the five elements, earth, etc., which constitute the three worlds, are in the general ruin and dissolution of things which takes place within a certain time, again drawn back in the reverse order to that in which they emerged from the original principle, because they return, step by step, to their first cause—that is, to what is highest and inseparable, which is Nature. To this the three qualities, goodness, passion, and darkness, are attributed; the further attributes of these determinations may be very interesting, but they are understood in a very superficial way. For it is said that nature operates through the admixture of these three qualities; each thing has all three within itself, like three streams which flow together; it also works by means of modifications, just as water which is soaked in through the roots of plants and led up into the fruit, obtains a special flavor. There are hence only the categories of admixture and of modification present. The Indians say: Nature has

these three qualities in her own right as her forms and characteristics; other things have them only because they are present in them as effects of the former.

We still have to consider the relation of nature to spirit. "Nature, although it is quite inanimate, performs the office of preparing the soul for its freedom, just as it is the function of milk—of a substance having no sensation—to nourish the calf." The Sankhya makes the following simile. Nature is like a *bajadere* showing herself to the soul as to an audience; she is abused for her impudence in exposing herself too often to the rude gaze of the spectators. "But she retires when she has shown herself sufficiently; she does so because she has been seen, and the audience retires because it has seen. Nature has no further use as regards the soul, and yet the union remains a lasting one." With the attainment of intellectual knowledge through the study of principles, the final, incontrovertible, single truth is learnt, that "I neither am, nor is anything mine, nor do I exist." That is, the personality is still distinguished from the soul, and finally personality and self-consciousness disappear for the Indian. "Everything that comes forth in consciousness is reflected by the soul, but like an image which does not dull the crystal of the soul, and does not belong to it. In possession of this self-knowledge" (without personality) "the soul contemplates nature at its ease, thus exempt from all terrible variation, and freed from every other form and operation of the understanding, with the exception of this spiritual knowledge." This is a mediate spiritual knowledge of the likewise spiritualized content—a knowledge without personality and consciousness. "The soul still indeed remains for some time in bodily garb, but this is only so after the same manner as the potter's wheel, when the jar is perfected, still turns round from the effect of the previously given impulse." The soul thus has, according to the Indians, nothing further to do with the body, and its connection therewith is therefore a superfluous one. "But when the separation of the already prepared soul from its body at length comes to pass, and nature is done with soul, the absolute and final liberation is accomplished." Here we find the crowning moments in the Sankhya philosophy.

## 2. The Philosophy of Gotama and Kanada

The philosophy of Gotama and that of Kanada belong to one another. The philosophy of Gotama is called Nyaya (reasoning), and that of

Kanada, Vaiseshika (particular). The first is a specially perfect dialectic, and the second, on the other hand, occupies itself with physics, that is, with particular or sensuous objects. Colebrooke says: "No department of science or of literature has taken up the attention of the Indians more than the Nyaya; and the fruit of this study is an infinite number of writings, included in which there may be found the works of very celebrated men of learning. The system which Gotama and Kanada observe is that indicated in one part of the Vedas as being the path which must be trodden in the pursuit of learning and study; viz., enunciation, definition, and investigation. Enunciation is the specification of a thing by its name, that is, by the expression denoting it, as revelation directs; for language is considered as revealed to man. Definition sets forth the particular quality which constitutes the real character of a thing. Investigation consists in an inquiry into the adequacy and sufficiency of the definition. In conformity with this, the teachers of philosophy presuppose scientific terms, proceed to definitions and then come to the investigation of the thus premised subjects." By the name, the ordinary conception is indicated, and with it what is given in definition is compared in investigation. What comes next is the object to be contemplated. "Gotama here adduces sixteen points, amongst which proof, evidence" (which is formal), "and what has to be proved, are the principal; the others are merely subsidiary and accessory, as contributing to the knowledge and confirmation of the truth. The Nyaya concurs with the other psychological schools in this, that it promises happiness, final excellence, and freedom from evil as the reward of a perfect knowledge of the principles which it teaches, that is to say, of the Truth, meaning the conviction of the eternal existence of the soul as separable from body," which makes spirit independent. Soul then is itself the object which is to be known and proved. This has still to be shown more particularly.

*a.* The first point of importance, the evidence brought forth as proof, is said to be divided into four kinds: first of all, perception; secondly, inference, of which there are three kinds, viz., inference from result to cause, that from cause to effect, and that derived from analogy. The third kind of evidence is comparison, the fourth, trustworthy authority, including both tradition and the revelation implied in it. These kinds of proof are much brought forward, both in the ancient Treatise ascribed to Gotama and in innumerable commentaries.

b. The second point of importance is found in the subjects which have to be proved, and which have to be made evident; and of these twelve are here given. The first and most important is, however, the soul, as the seat, distinguished from the body and from the senses, of feeling and of knowledge, the existence of which is proved through inclination, disinclination, will, etc. It has fourteen qualities: number, size, individuality, connection, separation, intelligence, pleasure, pain, desire, dislike, will, merit, fault, and imagination. We see in this first commencement of reflection, which is quite without order, neither connection nor any totality of determinations. The second object of knowledge is body; the third, the organs of sensation, as the five outward senses are called. These are not modifications of consciousness, as the Sankhya asserts, but matter constructed out of the elements, which respectively consist of earth, water, light, air, and ether. The pupil of the eye is not, they say, the organ of sight, nor the ear of bearing, but the organ of seeing is a ray of light that proceeds from the eye to the object; the organ of hearing is the ether that in the cavity of the ear communicates with the object heard, through the ether that is found between. The ray of light is usually invisible, just as a light is not seen at mid-day, but in certain circumstances it is visible. In taste, a watery substance like saliva is the organ, and so on. We find something similar to what is here said about sight in Plato's *Timaeus* (pp. 45, 46, Steph.; pp. 50-3, Bekk.); there are interesting remarks upon the phosphorus of the eyes in a paper by Schultz, contained in Goethe's *Morphology*. Examples of men seeing at night, so that their eyes lighted up the object, are brought forward in numbers, but the demonstration certainly demands particular conditions. The objects of sense form the fourth subject. Here Keshava, a commentator, inserts the categories of Kanada, of which there are six. The first of these is substance, and of this there are nine kinds: earth, water, light, air, ether, time, space, soul, understanding. The fundamental elements of material substances are by Kanada regarded as if they were original atoms, and afterwards aggregates of the same; he maintains the everlasting nature of atoms, and thus much is adduced about the union of atoms, by which means motes are also produced. The second category is that of Quality, and of it there are twenty-four kinds, viz., 1, color; 2, taste; 3, smell; 4, tangibility; 5, numbers; 6, size; 7, individuality; 8, conjunction; 9, separation; 10, priority; 11, posteriority; 12, weight; 13, fluidity; 14, viscosity;



15, sound; 16, intelligence; 17, pleasure; 18, pain; 19, desire; 20, dislike; 21, will; 22, virtue; 23, vice; 24, a capacity which includes three different qualities, viz., celerity, elasticity, and power of imagination. The third category is action; the fourth, association of qualities; the fifth, distinction; the sixth, is aggregation, and, according to Kanada, this is the last; other writers add negation as the seventh. This is the manner in which philosophy is regarded by the Indians.

c. The philosophy of Gotama makes doubt the third topic, succeeding those of the evidence of knowledge, and the subjects of interest to knowledge. Another topic is regular proof, formal reasoning, or the perfect syllogism (Nyaya), which consists of five propositions: 1, the proposition; 2, the reason; 3, the instance; 4, the application; 5, the conclusion. To take examples: 1. This hill is burning; 2. because it smokes; 3. what smokes is burning, like a kitchen fire; 4. accordingly the hill smokes; 5. therefore, it is on fire. This is propounded as syllogisms are with us, but in the manner adopted; the matter which is in point is propounded first. We should, on the contrary, begin with the general. This is the ordinary form, and these examples may satisfy us, yet we shall recapitulate the matter once more.

We have seen that in India the point of main importance is the soul's drawing itself within itself, raising itself up into liberty, or thought, which constitutes itself for itself. This becoming explicit of soul in the most abstract mode may be called intellectual substantiality, but here it is not the unity of mind and nature that is present, but directly the opposite. To mind, the consideration of nature is only the vehicle of thought or its exercise, which has as its aim the liberation of mind. Intellectual substantiality is in India the end, while in Philosophy it is in general the true commencement; to philosophize is the idealism of making thought, in its own right, the principle of truth. Intellectual substantiality is the opposite of the reflection, understanding, and the subjective individuality of the European. With us it is of importance that I will, know, believe, think this particular thing according to the grounds that I have for so doing, and in accordance with my own free will; and upon this an infinite value is set. Intellectual substantiality is the other extreme from this; it is that in which all the subjectivity of the "I" is lost; for it everything objective has become vanity, there is for it no objective truth, duty, or right, and thus subjective vanity is the only thing left. The point of interest is to reach intellectual substantiality in order

to drown in it that subjective vanity with all its cleverness and reflection. This is the advantage of arriving at this point of view.

The defect in such a view is that because intellectual substantiality, while represented as end and aim for the subject, as a condition that has to be produced in the interest of the subject, even though it be most objective, is yet only quite abstractly objective; and hence the essential form of objectivity is wanting to it. That intellectual substantiality that thus remaining in abstraction, has as its existence the subjective soul alone. Just as in empty vanity, where the subjective power of negation alone remains, everything disappears, this abstraction of intellectual substantiality only signifies an escape into what is empty and without determination, wherein everything vanishes. Therefore what remains to be done is to force forward the real ground of the inwardly self-forming and determining objectivity—the eternal form within itself, which is what men call Thought. Just as this Thought in the first place, as subjective, is mine, because I think, but in the second place is universality which comprehends intellectual substantiality, it is likewise in the third place forming activity, the principle of determination. This higher kind of objectivity that unfolds itself, alone gives a place to the particular content, allows it to have free scope and receives it into itself. If in the Oriental view, the particular shakes and is destined to fall, it still has its place grounded on thought. It is able to root itself in itself, it is able to stand firm, and this is the hard European understanding. Such Eastern ideas tend to destroy it, but it is preserved active in the soil of thought; it cannot exist when regarded as independent, but must exist only as a moment in the whole system. In the Eastern Philosophy we have also discovered a definite content, which is brought under our consideration; but the consideration is destitute of thought or system because it comes from above and is outside of the unity. On that side there stands intellectual substantiality, on this side it appears dry and barren; the particular thus only has the dead form of simple reason and conclusion, such as we find in the Scholastics. Based on the ground of thought, on the other hand, the particular may receive its dues; it may be regarded and grasped as a moment in the whole organization. The Idea has not become objective in the Indian Philosophy; hence the external and objective has not been comprehended in accordance with the Idea. This is the deficiency in Orientalism.

The true, objective ground of thought finds its basis in the real freedom of the subject; the universal or substantial must itself have objectivity. Because thought is this universal, the ground of the substantial and likewise "I"—thought is the implicit and exists as the free subject—the universal has immediate existence and actual presence; it is not only an end or condition to be arrived at, but the absolute character is objective. It is this principle that we find in the Greek world, and the object of our further consideration is its development. The universal first appears as quite abstract, and as such it confronts the concrete world; but its value is both for the ground of the concrete world and for that which is implicit. It is not a beyond; for the value of the present lies in the fact that it exists in the implicit; or that which is implicit, the universal, is the truth of present objects.

## Fragments

### Oriental Spirit, Logic, and Right\*

#### Oriental Spirit<sup>1</sup>

*Oriental Spirit.* Respect for reality within reality and ornamentation of the imagination.—The orientals have firmly determined personalities. As they are once, they change no more. They do not stray from the direction of the path once taken. What is beyond their path does not

\* The extracts presented in this chapter are taken from the following essays. 'Science of Logic': *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, vol. 1, 2 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929), Section 3, "Measure," pp. 346–7.

'The Philosophy of Right': *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. S. W. Dyde (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1896), § 262, 270, 354, 355, pp. 252, 258–9, 346–7.

'Oriental Spirit': "Geist der Orientalen" ["Oriental Spirit"] (1799), *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* [Documents Concerning Hegel's Development], ed. J. Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1936), pp. 257–61/ "Geist der Orientalen," in *Frühe Schriften, Werke 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 428–32.

<sup>1</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Geist der Orientalen*, in *Frühe Schriften, Werke 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 428–32. Note: all italic text appears in italics in the original.

exist for [Oriental spirit]. But what disturbs them on the path is hostile for them. Their once firmly determined character cannot let go of itself, it cannot integrate and propitiate what is against it. One becomes dominant, the other the dominated. Power is the concept by which their nature is the same. Violence (*Gewalt*) is their relationship to each other, force of strength, of genius, or of speech. A firmly determined character tolerates nothing besides himself, other than what he dominates or by which he is dominated; for there are barriers—realities within him—that cannot be sublated, that cannot coexist among other conflicting truths—including adversaries—other than through that relationship. As the bounds of character provide truths that cannot be alleviated by love, they must be *objectively* integrated, i.e., under a *law*. The same reality gives the necessity that the law dominate everyone. Therefore, two seemingly contradictory dispositions of the oriental character are so intimately connected: *domination over everything* and *voluntary submission into any slavery*. The law of necessity prevails over both. Here both conditions, mastery and slavery, are just, for both are governed by the same law of violence (*Gewalt*). In the orient, the fortunate man is he who has the *courage* to subdue those weaker than himself, and who has the *prudence* not to attack those stronger than, or subdue those equal to, him. Here, the *wise* man is he who withdraws from reality and gets into speeches and proverbs. *Noble* is the more educated who knows to discriminate, and subjugates only in proportion to how much he was resisted; he thus equates himself with the subdued, recognizing the law of necessity over him and himself. He sees in himself, the actual victor, the possibly-vanquished, and honors the potential-victor in he who was actually subjugated. This contingency of the *opposite*, this unending potentiality for the multifarious realities, as possible victor or as possible vanquished; this power that appears in the transitions from negative to positive, and from positive to negative, is the infinite godhead of the oriental. Events are woven on the loom of [the godhead's] will and governance, and from the source of his command flow into the abyss of his power the currents of time and centuries.

—Given the firm determination of the oriental character, man's relationships are few and everyone who appears soon receives his place. Man with a firmly determined character engages with nothing that is not kindred. Most of whatever can offend him he pushes aside. He fights the remaining and becomes master over it or succumbs to its force (*Gewalt*), but his claims remain the same. This immutability—this inability to

be moved by the versatile multifariousness of things—maintains the oriental's calm. Because for him the world is a collection of realities that only appear as naked form, as mere opposites without soul and spirit, he needs to replace them with *foreign, borrowed glamor* to remedy their poverty and make up for what is missing in their own content. The oriental adorns reality with imagination. He envelops everything in images. Even though these images are images of reality, and one lack seems unable to give glamor to another, still they are poetic by their association. The association of the non-like creates a semblance of life that lies in the similarity of the things connected. What you well know they are not aware of, because what is miscellaneous seems so dissimilar to a dark consciousness. But they cannot dare to let a form of pure life emerge. The sublime beauty of their images amaze, the splendor of their paintings is blinding. But one is amazed just because of the violence within the linkage of the dissimilar. Because one can make no claim to the glory of this objectivity one is blinded. Because it is not joined by love, the feeling is empty, and the treasures—the pearls of oriental spirit, are only wild beautiful beasts. But where the objectivity of life emerges as a unity, stripped of multifariousness, there can only be a concept, a general one, which fills their canvases.

—The determination of character does not permit for great multifariousness of characters. The multifariousness of determinations would disintegrate by itself. But what is beyond this determination, in substance identical but of higher and deeper force, must have served *wonderfully* as an invisible, a superior. The manner of composition of both lasting or ephemeral Oriental empires—a system of obedience and subordination of such wild masses—clearly shows the power of the oriental character, which, with strength, depth, and persistence, and even though of similar character, almost annihilates the orientals who have succumbed. From this also arises the *importance* and therefore the *frugality* and *seriousness of speech* as an expression of an invisible and in itself unknowable life.

—Just as the orientals decorate naked reality with other things from their imagination, so must they overload themselves with foreign ornaments, having such an incomplete awareness of themselves and incapable of finding agreement on a satisfactory representation of their nature. Their *adornment* cannot be clothing that receives its form and beauty from the human shape and its own free play, but rather from

totally foreign things. These are not natural wholes with which one adorns oneself out of love, thus being decorated by one's own feeling; but rather things having their own life and form shaped by life, stripped, polished, gold; dressed in borrowed forms, in bouquets of flowers and so forth.

—In the Orient nature was expelled from the natural and appears only as vulgar and subjugated. The female mind was not enjoyed by domination, nor was the *love of women* such a passion. In many oriental nations it is dishonorable, especially among nobles, to mention women, and anything regarding them. This is either because even the bravest do not feel like masters in this regard and are reminded of their weakness; or rather because no one was ashamed of this weakness and a reference to this aspect of human nature is held for dishonor because they honored the feminine as something alien and superior to their own spirit. Thus they were afraid to put it into the class of common things, because they felt that the relationship of women could never be the same as the relationship of all other things: namely, mastery or slavery, and women are something for them that they can never treat in such a manner and from whom they can never be safe—orientals know no other counsel than *locking them away!*

—The Jews did not have this timidity. They spoke of gender relations freely and straightforwardly. But for them, everything that refers to it, like everything else, a mere reality, a drain of the spirit of love. This drained spirit governs their handling with these phenomena. This handling is in law and hagiography, the sum of their education, remarkably outrageous, abject, and disgraceful. The holier and purer a soulful essence the more abhorrent it is to portray and treat the organs and their expressions as mere objects.

—For the orientals the *beard* is holy. For the Jews, no clipping blade should touch the head of a Nasirite, or consecrated one. Every seventh or perhaps every fifteenth year was consecrated to God, no field could be tilled, no grape-vine cut, no vintage harvested. Servants, brutes, and wild game should freely take part in the voluntary produce of the soil. It is a great arbitrariness to let the beard grow. It is probably an organ of the body, although of a minor degree. In this regard, nail clipping too, and for the orientals, the commonly practiced, and for boys demanded, circumcision, is probably an even greater mutilation. The retention of the beard cannot be seen as respect for the completeness of the human

body, for which the covering of the body with tasteless garments and ornateness, with shining and multiple adornment, is a contradiction. The arbitrariness that is imposed by the law is defended with an even larger waywardness, as the sacrifice has a greater merit with an ever-greater arbitrariness to which one bows. Why does the oriental impose this arbitrariness on himself? Why the importance of the beard being holy? Given that for the oriental spirit all value and existence is in the infinite object, he does not think of an independent existence and needs to dress himself up with shining lifeless adornments. To make something of himself and to try to maintain himself he needs to honor the most irrelevant, the beard, the most circumstantial of his organic wholeness.

### Science of Logic

The observation here made extends more generally to those systems of Pantheism upon which thought has done its elaborating work. Being, the One, Substance, the Infinite, or Essence is the first; in opposition to this abstract element the second, namely, every kind of determinateness, can equally abstractly be grouped as that which is merely finite, accidental, perishable, unessential, and non-essential; and this is the next and ordinary step in purely formal thought. But the connection of the second with the first makes itself so evident that both must be taken as one unity; and thus with Spinoza, the Attribute is the whole substance, that is, as taken by Understanding—itself a limitation or Mode: and Mode (which is the non-substantial in general, which can be understood only from an Other), is thus the other extreme for Substance, the third in general. Indian Pantheism, in all its monstrous imagination has also, taken abstractly, received this elaboration; this is the tempering thread which leads through its riot to this point of moderate interest, that Brahma, the One of abstract thought, passes through the shape of Vishnu (especially in the form of Krishna) to the third form, Shiva. The determination of this third is Mode, change, arising and passing away, the field of externality in general. This Indian triad has led to a comparison with the Christian; it must be recognized that they have a common element of conceptual determination; but it is essential that the difference be more definitely brought to consciousness: the difference is not only infinite, but true infinity constitutes the difference itself. According to its determination this third principle is the explosion



of substantial unity into its opposite, and not its return to itself—the non-spiritual, not Spirit. In the true triad not only unity is found, but harmony—the consummation of a pregnant and real unity, which in its wholly concrete determination is Spirit. The principle of Mode and change does not indeed exclude: thus with Spinoza the Mode as such is the false, and Substance alone is the true, and everything must be reduced to it; which is a jettison of all content into the void, into a unity merely formal and without content; and similarly, Shiva, once more is the great whole, not distinct from Brahma, it is Brahma itself; that is, the difference and the determinateness vanish again, but are neither preserved, nor transcended; unity is not led back to concrete unity, nor dissension to reconciliation. The highest goal for man transplanted into the sphere of arising and passing away, of modality in general, is submersion into unconsciousness, unity with Brahma, annihilation; which is the same as the Buddhist Nirvana, Nibbana, and so forth.

The Mode is abstract externality in general and indifference to qualitative and to quantitative determinations, and in essence what is external and unessential should not matter; but on the other hand it is often admitted that all depends upon the how and why. The Mode is thus declared essentially to belong to the substantial part of a thing. This very indefinite relation contains at least this, that this external part is the externality not quite so abstractly.

The Mode here has the definite meaning of Measure. Spinoza's Mode, like the Indian principle of Change, is the measureless. The Greek idea, though indeterminate as yet, that everything has a Measure (which led Parmenides to introduce, after abstract Being, Necessity as the ancient Limit imposed on all things), is the beginning of a much higher concept than that contained in Substance and the difference between Mode and Substance.

## Philosophy of Right

*Addition:* In the Platonic state subjective freedom has not as yet any place, since in it the rulers assigned to individuals their occupations. In many oriental states occupation depends upon birth. But subjective freedom, which must be respected, demands free choice for individuals.

*Note:* We must here touch upon the relation of the state to religion. In modern times it is often repeated that religion is the foundation of

the state, and accompanying this assertion is the dogmatic claim that outside of religion nothing remains to political science. Now, no assertion can be more confusing. Indeed, it exalts confusion to the place of an essential element in the constitution of the state, and of a necessary form of knowledge. In the first place it may seem suspicious that religion is principally commended and resorted to in times of public distress, disturbance, and oppression; it is thought to furnish consolation against wrong, and the hope of compensation in the case of loss. A proof of religious feeling is considered to be indifference to worldly affairs and to the course and tenor of actual life. But the state is the spirit, as it abides in the world. To refer people to religion is far from calculated to exalt the interest and business of the state into a really earnest purpose. On the contrary, state concerns are held to be a matter of pure caprice, and are therefore rejected. The ground for this step is that in the state only the purposes of passion and unlawful power prevail, or that religion, when taken by itself, is sufficient to control and decide what is right. It would surely be regarded as a bitter jest if those who were oppressed by any despotism were referred to the consolations of religion; nor is it to be forgotten that religion may assume the form of a galling superstition, involving the most abject servitude, and the degradation of man below the level of the brute. Amongst the Egyptians and Hindus animals are revered as higher creatures than man. Such a fact leads us to observe that we cannot speak of *religion* in general, and that when it assumes certain forms security must be found against it in some power which will guarantee the rights of reason and self-consciousness.



[...] The four world-historic empires are: (1) the Oriental, (2) the Greek, (3) the Roman, and (4) the Germanic.

(1) The Oriental Empire: The first empire is the substantive world-intuition, which proceeds from the natural whole of patriarchal times. It has no internal divisions. Its worldly government is theocracy, its ruler a high priest or God, its constitution and legislation are at the same time its religion, and its civic and legal regulations are religious and moral commands or usages. In the splendor of this totality the individual personality sinks without rights; external nature is directly

divine or an ornament of God, and the history of reality is poetry. The distinctions, which develop themselves in customs, government, and the state, serve instead of laws, being converted by mere social usage into clumsy, diffuse, and superstitious ceremonies, the accidents of personal power and arbitrary rule. The division into classes becomes a caste fixed as the laws of nature. Since in the Oriental empire there is nothing stable, or rather what is firm is petrified, it has life only in a movement, which goes on from the outside, and becomes an elemental violence and desolation. Internal repose is merely a private life, which is sunk in feebleness and lassitude.

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